A Multiparameter Analysis of a Select Repertoire of British Punk Rock of the First Wave, 1976 - 1979

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Promoter: Professor Winfried Lüdemann
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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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SUMMARY

Since 1979, the year in which British punk came to an end, it has enjoyed prominence in cultural studies, both in the United Kingdom and abroad. The majority of serious academic discourse on punk has dealt almost exclusively with the cultural significance thereof, taking into account its political stance, its fashion sense, its attitude towards class, and its legacy in Britain. Although there is a considerable amount of literature written about punk rock, there have not yet been any publications that deal explicitly with the music itself.

Musicology has still not applied itself satisfactorily to popular music. Instead, musicologists use a variety of existing methods to analyse popular music, but with varying degrees of success. It is important to have an applicable analytical method, but the analyst must know where to find meaning in popular music first. In this thesis I attempt to find the loci of meaning in punk rock in order to demonstrate the *musical* significance of this extraordinary music.

The study begins with an analysis of political and social conditions in postwar Britain, with particular reference to the emergence of punk as youth subculture. This is followed by a comparative discussion of existing approaches to popular music study (and their respective strengths and weaknesses), at the end of which Philip Tagg's multiparameter model of analysis is identified as particularly satisfactory. This model is then used to pay particular attention to the two major solidifications of popular music, namely structure and transmission. Once the various loci of meaning in music as sounding object, i.e. music in performance, have been identified, particular examples of punk rock are subjected to a set of parametric analyses according to an extensive checklist of what Tagg calls "parameters of musical expression", also taking into account aspects of musical performance that cannot be captured by music notation. Based on the findings of the multiparameter analyses of twenty-six punk songs, the thesis is concluded with some general remarks regarding the misrepresentation of punk rock in the existing literature.

OPSOMMING

Sedert 1979, die jaar waarin Britse punk tot 'n einde gekom het, beklee dit 'n prominente posisie in kulturele studies in die Verenigde Koninkryk, maar ook oorsee. Die meerderheid ernstige akademiese diskoerse oor punk het tot dusver feitlik uitsluitlik gehandel oor die kulturele belang daarvan, met inbegrip van die politieke sieninge, die modesin, die houding teenoor klas, en die nalatenskap in Brittanje. Hoewel daar aansienlike literatuur bestaan met punk rock as onderwerp, is daar tot dusver nog geen publikasies wat die musiek op sigself bestudeer nie.

Die Musiekweteskap het homself nog nie bevredigend toegespits op populêre musiek nie. In plaas daarvan gebruik musiekwetenskaplikes 'n verskeidenheid bestaande metodes om populêre musiek te analiseer, maar met gemengde welslae. Dit is belangrik om 'n toepaslike analitiese metode te hê, maar eerstens moet die analis weet waar om betekenis in populêre musiek op te spoor. In hierdie tesis poog ek om die ligging van betekenis in punk rock op te spoor, om sodoende die *musikale* beduidenis van hierdie uitsonderlike musiek te demonstreer.

Die studie begin met 'n analise van die politieke en sosiale omstandighede in na-oorlogse Brittanje, met besondere verwysing na die totstandkoming van punk as jeugsubkultuur. Hierop volg 'n vergelykende bespreking van bestaande benaderings tot die studie van populêre musiek (en hul onderskeie sterk en swak punte), waarna Philip Tagg se veelparameter analitiese model as besonder bevredigend geïdentifiseer word. Hierdie model word dan gebruik om in die besonder aandag te skenk aan die twee hoofverwesenlikinge van populêre musiek, naamlik struktuur en transmissie. Nadat die liggings van betekenis van musiek as klinkende objek, d.i. musiek in uitvoering, geïdentifiseer is, word spesifieke voorbeelde van punk rock onderwerp aan 'n stel parametriese analises, aan die hand van 'n uitgebreide oorsiglys van wat Tagg "parameters van musikale uitdrukking" noem, met inbegrip van aspekte van musiekuitvoering wat nie deur musieknotasie weergegee kan word nie. Op grond van die bevindinge van die veelparameter-analise van ses-en-twintig punkliedere, word die tesis afgesluit met enkele algemene opmerkings oor die wanvoorstelling van punk rock in die bestaande literatuur.

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"All the kids still exist. They've come from all corners of the old city, with a history that reaches back past the medieval castles and the Tudor beer houses. This city that sits like an exclamation mark in the sky. The kids have come to reclaim their past. A past that still holds hope for the future and an affirmation of why they survive. Dressed in the trappings of their rebellion, they stumble on stack heels, winkle pickers and brothel creepers. Combs that drip with decades of past glories. They are one, the names of their former tribes are forgotten. 'When we were young', a sigh, a knowing nod. Each one of these kids knows the feeling of being part of something at the moment when it ruled the world. When the needle hit the groove and the sound crashed into their lives. When the music of ghosts became that of the Gods."

Mark Perry, quoted in album sleeve (CD Booklet)
Saint Etienne, *Finisterre*

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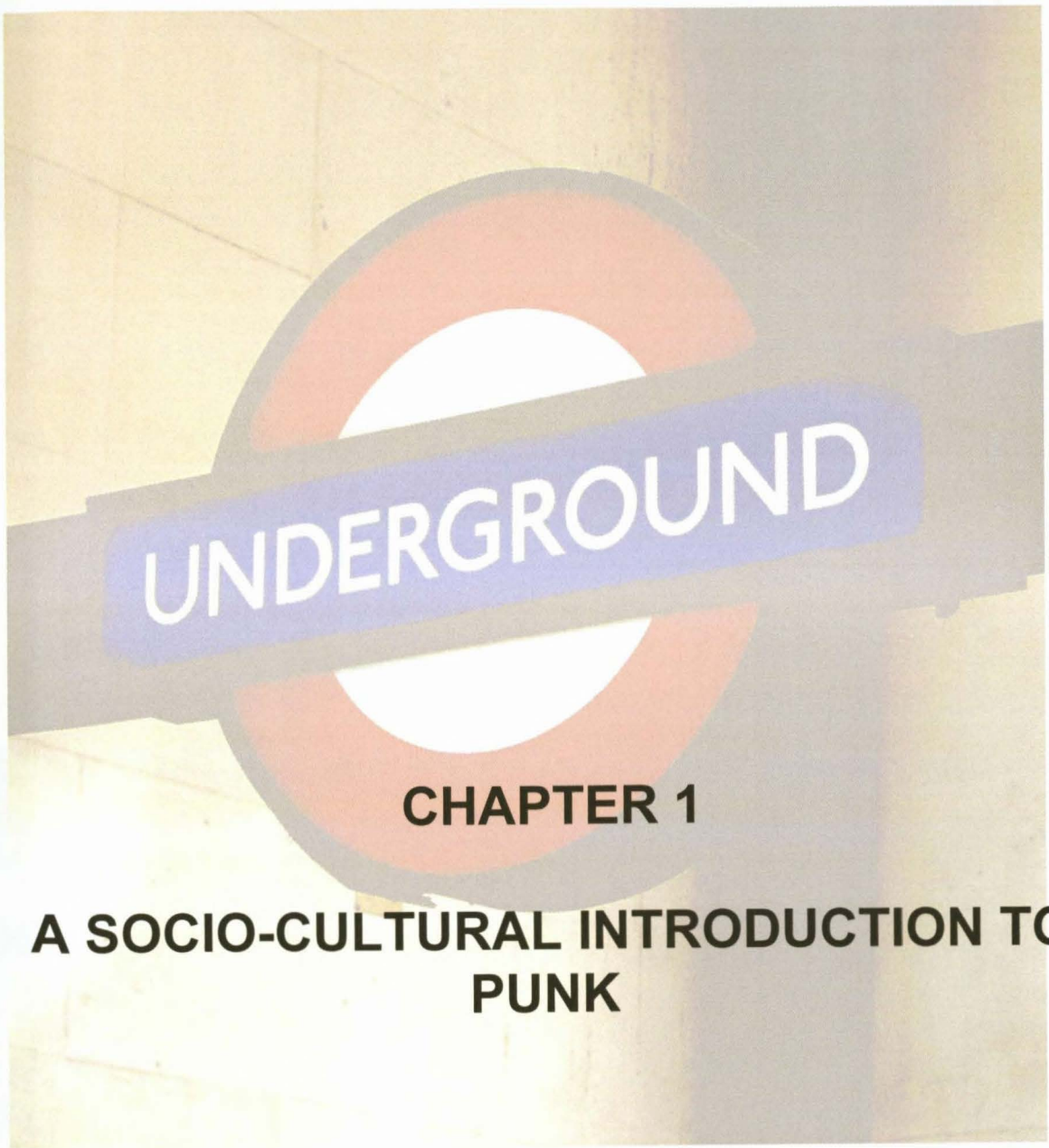

Underground Sign, Piccadilly Circus Station, London
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CHAPTER 1

A SOCIO-CULTURAL INTRODUCTION TO PUNK

1

INTRODUCTION

Winston Churchill's postwar England found itself in an extremely precarious predicament. Having won the war, but with its reserves and resources nearly depleted, the once mighty British Empire was gradually coming to terms with the crippling effect of a war that had raged for six years. Churchill's prowess as a wartime leader could not ensure victory for the Conservatives in the ensuing election of June-July 1945. Thus Britain's problems became the responsibility of Clement Attlee and the new Labour government. The new government's main domestic issues were housing, employment, social security, healthcare and education, all of which were in a state of dire dysfunction: large sections of the population lived in unhealthily densely populated conurbations, employment had to be created in the sudden absence of a war effort, security and health services for the poor were insufficient (the NHS was created only in 1948) and the number of pupils who completed school was alarmingly low. In addition to this, the British economy suffered severely, as Bartlett notes:

> Britain's external liabilities were nearing £3.5 billion by the middle of 1945 - a sevenfold increase - yet her reserves totalled less than £500 million. It was estimated that further foreign debts of at least another £1.25 billion would be incurred over the next three years before the nation could pay its way internationally, and that, given the many changes in Britain's economic circumstances, it was expected that in order to achieve long-term solvency the volume of British exports would have to be at least 50 per cent higher than before the war. This figure was later raised to 75 per cent. Yet in June 1945 no less than 45 per cent of the nation's employable manpower was still directly or indirectly devoted to the war effort. Conversion to the needs of peace had barely begun (Bartlett 1977:24).

Despite Britain's own economic decline it continued to run up debts to members of the sterling area. In the same vein it provided financial aid totalling £80 million per annum to Germany. The economic burden of this enterprise proved too strenuous for Britain and by December 1946 it was decided that the British and American sectors of Germany would merge, in order to relieve the strain. Still, Britain was reluctant to go into a coalition with either the United States or the USSR. A refusal to accept its own relegation to a state of lesser importance and international sway prevented Britain from forming any immediate bond with the USA. In the case of Russia, the threat that the USSR might successfully propagate communism in Turkey and Greece made Britain wary of an Anglo-Soviet alliance. On another level, the imperial aspirations of Britain were met with disapproval on the part of these two world powers, both pronouncing anti-colonial sentiments.

It was, however, inevitable that Britain would have to make certain concessions if it were to avoid total economic stagnation. The first of these was the agreement on a loan from the United States for the period 1946 - 1948. Bartlett writes:

> At the beginning of 1945 the British were hoping that, through Roosevelt's goodwill and the expected continuation of the war against Japan into 1946, it would be possible to lean on Lend-Lease while the economy began its conversion to peace. These hopes faded under a new President and in the face of an increasingly critical Congress. The sudden collapse of Japan in August meant the end of Lend-Lease long before the most pessimistic British calculations. A paper before the war cabinet on 14 August 1945

> stated bluntly that without American aid in 1946-8 the nation would be 'virtually bankrupt and the economic basis for the hopes of the public non-existent'[1] (Bartlett 1977:23-24).

The United States offered Britain a loan of $3.75 billion at 2 per cent interest, accompanied by what Bartlett refers to as "damaging conditions" (1977:25). He continues:

> The terms were humiliating to a proud nation. Many on the right saw the loan as yet another assault on the Empire and sterling area. Robert Boothby likened the agreement to 'Munich', and accused the government of selling 'the British Empire for a pack of cigarettes' (Ibid.).

A second concession on Britain's part was giving sovereignty to many of its former colonies, dominions and protectorates. Already during the war Britain had granted constitutional concessions to Jamaica, Malta and the Gold Coast (now Ghana). British East India split up into India and Pakistan, both of which gained independence in 1947, followed by Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Burma (now Myanmar) in 1948. The period up to the late 1960s would see the further independence from Britain of Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960), Cyprus (1960), Sierra Leone (1961), South Africa (1961), Tanzania (1961), Jamaica (1962), Trinidad and Tobago (1962), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Malaysia (1963), Malawi (1964), Malta (1964), Zambia (1964), The Gambia (1965), Singapore (1965), Guyana (1966), Botswana (1966) and Lesotho (1966). With these concessions came the awakening to the fact that the USA was taking the empire's place as a world power, not only economically, but also through its cultural hegemony. Robert Cross observes:

> For Britain the second half of the 1940s and the 1950s is a litany of grim soul-searching as the British people, proud of their imperial past and recent victory, faced - or rather *refused* to face - the traumatic realisation that their nation would be playing a greatly diminished role in world affairs in the postwar dispensation, very much in the shadow of America. The Sterling crises of 1947 and 1949, Britain's humiliating and chaotic withdrawal from Palestine, Indian independence in 1947, and the Suez *débâcle* in 1956 were just some of the key developments that demonstrated that Britain was ceding

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[1]Bartlett quotes here from *The British War Economy* of 1949, by Hancock and Gowing.

> centre stage in world affairs. In popular parlance, Britain had 'won the war but lost the peace'. A deep loss of self-esteem was a grave problem for Britain domestically (Cross 1998:20).

This loss of self-esteem was countered in a rather surprising way. Lawrence James instantiates:

> At the same time as Britain was shedding its empire it shed many of its inhibitions. In 1960 gambling was legalised and the crown lost the case against the publication of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; in 1965 official censorship of the theatre was ended; in 1967 homosexual acts and abortion became legal; and in 1969 divorce became easier to obtain. Britain appeared suddenly to have relaxed and the old imperial capital, London, became a byword for novelty, stylishness and, like the 1960s as a whole, sexual permissiveness. Nothing was more revealing of the collapse of the old order and its codes than long-haired pop stars and their imitators cavorting in jeans and that revered symbol of empire, the British army's scarlet jacket. This fashion, like others of the period, came and went quickly, but not before there had been some surly comments from the old brigade. Worse followed as another sacred imperial totem, the Union Jack, found its way on to everything from nickers to shopping bags. This impiety towards the past and its icons was one of many manifestations of the profound change which British society was undergoing (James 1998:596-597).

James continues:

> That this transformation coincided with the break-up of empire is important for two reasons. First, it encompassed a radical assault on traditional values and attitudes, many of which were closely associated with the empire and those who had made and ruled it. If their ideals were bogus, then perhaps the institution itself was rotten throughout. Second, as the pace of change quickened ... it mattered little that Britain was a declining power. In any case, there were plenty of iconoclasts around to expose the hollowness of past glories (Ibid.:597).

It is clear that Britain's previous internal alineation was brought into a state of disrepair by the sentiment that its imperialism represented vacuous ideals. This was aggravated by a further destabilising agent, in the guise of the relatively sudden presence of non-British cultures on England's home turf. The loss of Britain's imperial outposts meant

a reversal of colonisation: Britain did not come to India and the Caribbean - the Caribbean and India now came to Britain as a constant reminder of the colonial past. Since 1952, the year of the McCarren-Walter Immigration Act, West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis started to settle in the working class neighbourhoods of the larger British cities (this will be discussed in greater detail in section 4. THE EMERGENCE OF SUBCULTURES). The entire British population was undergoing drastic changes.

1. POPULATION GROWTH AND REDISTRIBUTION

Although the birth rate in Britain after the war displayed two steep growth curves, with peaks in 1947 and 1962/3 on either side of a nadir in 1955, the resultant population increase varies greatly from one constituent country to the next. Growth in Scotland for the entire century stands at 14 per cent, while England experienced growth of 62 per cent over the same period (Office for National Statistics 1998:5). The death rate declined as the number of deaths per annum remained virtually unchanged during the century. It is, however, the geographical distribution of the population that is of the greatest importance. The rate of urbanisation increased substantially, with a dramatic gravitation towards South East England, and London in particular[2]. Not only did London offer more jobs than the rest of England, but more *new* jobs were created in London than anywhere else in Britain. It was projected by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (hereafter MHLG) in 1964 that the population of South East England would increase by 3.5 million from 1961 to 1981 (MHLG 1964:1). At the centre of this was London, an already large city unable to cope with a population increase of this magnitude. It became a certainty that only careful planning could successfully avert this menacing dilemma.

2. URBAN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

In February 1963 a white paper, *London - Employment: Housing: Land* was presented to Parliament. It stated:

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[2]The net migration gain for South East England during 1951-1961 was 413 000, exceeding the net migration gain in England and Wales by 126 000 (Ministry of Housing and Local Government 1964:23).

> The Government recognise that the need to match jobs, land, transport and housing over the next 20 years in London and South East England calls for a regional plan.... The regional study is examining the growth and movement of population in the South East, including overspill from London, and related employment and transport questions. It will examine the need for a second generation of new and expanded towns which would provide both houses and work for Londoners, well away from London itself, and draw off some of the pressure on the capital (Quoted in MHLG 1964:3).

Accordingly the government implemented a number of strategies to achieve a more balanced distribution of people and work, as well as a new vision for a more comprehensive network of roads and railway lines to link London with its areas of overspill. Among these strategies were the following:

2.1 Utopian Comprehensiveness

The London County Council, and later the Greater London Council's (hereafter GLC) normative approach to town planning comprised a theory of the kinds of urban environments town planning should attempt to create. Nigel Taylor writes:

> [Modern] town planning was characterised by 'Utopian comprehensiveness'; that is, a drive to build or rebuild anew whole cities or large parts of them. Utopianism always had this tendency, but what was new was the capacity of modern industrial technology to build some of these Utopian schemes on a large scale. Thus, within fifteen years of the end of the Second World War, a whole ring of new towns had been built around London and in the inner areas of many cities, huge schemes of comprehensive redevelopment had transformed the old urban fabric (Taylor 1998:75).

The GLC's concept of the ideal urban environment rested on two theories, as Taylor once again explains:

> [Two] schemes in particular had an especially powerful influence on British town planning in the 1950s and 1960s: Ebenezer Howard's proposals for garden cities and Le Corbusier's imaginary sketch of the 'radiant city'. Implicit in both these proposals was the Utopian suggestion that town planning should turn its back on existing cities and create an entirely new kind of urban settlement... [In] the post-war slum clearance and comprehensive redevelopment schemes of many inner-city areas, it was Le

> Corbusier's vision of the modern city of tower blocks which arose from the rubble in the late 1950s and 1960s. However, just as Howard's original ideas were corrupted, so were Le Corbusier's. Only in the London County Council's Alton Estate bordering Richmond Park was Le Corbusier's dream of the 'city in the park' realised. Elsewhere, high-rise council blocks were set coldly on a stage of grey concrete (Ibid.:24).

It was an unfortunate byproduct of Utopian comprehensiveness that work had to be done at a considerable pace and on a very grand scale, leaving no room for attention to detail or the *personal* needs of future inhabitants. The collective well-being of the newly formed communities was of some concern to the planners, who believed that they were alleviating suffering by creating logically planned urban residences, and developers who only executed plans made by the councils. In this regard Carey and Mapes conclude that:

> Architects and town planners openly admit that when designing an estate they are primarily concerned with practical and aesthetic considerations. To them the all important factors are such things as the final appearance of the estate and whether the traffic will flow smoothly around it. The effect of their design on the social lives of the future residents receives little attention (Carey & Mapes 1972:94).

London was expanding so quickly that land became extremely scarce, and consequently more expensive. Le Corbusier's vision of a city in the garden seemed to be an unlikely chimaera as concrete motorways took up the last remnants of open space. Thus an attempt at containing the urban expansion at the expense of the countryside was realised in the form of the introduction of policy that prevented the urbanisation of certain parts of land.

2.2 Green Belts

The MHLG report *The South East Study 1961-1981* states the following about the London green belt:

> The main problem in the South East is that of accommodating growth. Green belts, on the other hand, are instruments primarily of restriction. Moreover, it is of the essence

> of green belt policy that the restriction should be permanent. But permanent restriction sits uneasily with the knowledge that steady population increase is likely in the South East, not only during the period covered by this Study, but for as long afterwards as anyone can foresee. Whatever may be achieved by decentralisation, the pressures arising from current growth in and around London are falling in areas which are critical for the future of the green belt. Over the period of the Study, there is likely to be a natural increase of 1 million people in the London conurbation - the area surrounded by the green belt - and a natural increase nearly as great (870,000) in the outer metropolitan region, the ring of mingled town and country in which the green belt and the proposed extensions are situated (MHLG 1964:89).

The London green belt served to contain the urban expansion by designating pockets of urban development beyond the green belt itself and by forcing development inside the conurbation to be of a high density, i.e. high-rise buildings that occupy minimal space on the ground.

3. SOME OUTCOMES OF URBAN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

Despite the containment of unbridled growth of the British capital, the effects of Utopian comprehensiveness, the green belt and the decentralisation of the population were much more far-reaching than initially conceived by the government. The reality was that people were supplanted from familiar surroundings to foreign ones where elevated concrete motorways segregated neighbourhoods and isolated households. According to Phil Cohen the familiar structures of communal space (streets, public houses and corner shops) were destroyed in favour of "the privatized space of family units, stacked on top of each other, in total isolation" (Cohen 1972:90). Cohen also observes that these developments destroyed matrilocal residence - the network of neighbours and extended family was dissolved, leaving only the nuclear family as matrix of kinship. While the nuclear family was physically and spiritually severed from society, it had to bear the strain of having to compensate for a support structure lost entirely to the redistribution of people. With the housing units designed for the nuclear family, young, unmarried people had little or no chance of acquiring an own place to live and were therefore forced to live with their parents way beyond their teens - at least until they married and began nuclear families of their own. Although marriage provided some

chance of acquiring an own home, it was by no means a guarantee. As a further obstacle, suburbanisation caused property prices to soar, making own dwellings unobtainable to the working class.

A further effect of the relocation of the urban population was the sudden cultural diversification of neighbourhoods and the mixing of the classes within these. The process of gentrification presented more difficulty to a working class that was struggling to maintain the integrity of the social fabric. There is, however, no one single aspect of the new suburban disposition that can rival the severity of racial tension in the council estates of postwar Britain. It is exactly this aspect that gave solidarity to the new generation of postwar subcultures.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF SUBCULTURES

Postwar Britain saw the rise and fall of many young, divergent, often delinquent and violent male subcultural groupings that created their various trademark looks, attitudes, tastes, preferences and styles. There were the Teddy Boys (or Teds), the Rockers, the Rude Boys, the Modernists (or Mods), the Hipsters, the Beats, the Skinheads (or Skins), the Two Tones and Punks, among others. Although these groups are all clearly distinct, they are not squarely opposed to one another, but rather display inherent similarities. They all display an unwillingness or even inability to be assimilated into their parent culture, for instance. In all of them are traces of unresolved difficulty, frustration, anger, cynicism and disbelief in a system that was failing. But despite their hard exteriors, these groups provided some comfort to disenfranchised individuals, either by voicing their concerns and anger in a public and highly visual spectacle or merely by the provision of a group solidarity asserted by coded dress, ritualistic practices and painstakingly individualised (and sometimes highly esoteric) argot.

Robert Cross uses the example of the Teds:

> The Teds were the first teenage subculture in Britain to construct new identities for themselves in order to compensate for socioeconomic marginalisation. One explanation for this was that they came from a class that was in the throes of

> experiencing the break-up of its traditionally close-knit communities. The policy of slum clearance during the 1950s had a disastrous and irreparable impact upon the working-class communities of east and south London. As whole streets of terraced houses and tenements were demolished and families were rehoused either in tower blocks or the new satellite towns on the outskirts of London, family and neighbourhood ties were broken. The Teds, as with the skinheads who followed them a decade later, thus felt the need to recreate community and territory among themselves by constructing and rigorously self-regulating a group-oriented style (Cross 1998:12).

The homogeneity of communities in London's neighbourhoods before was severely altered by new legislation regarding immigration. The post-1952 era saw an influx of Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani and Indian people to South East England with a rapidity never experienced before. The result was a marked increase in cultural diversity that meant that difference was no longer merely a matter of class, but one of ethnicity, language, religion and culture. The notion of "Britishness" was challenged as ethnic minorities gained citizenship of and residency in Britain.

In his landmark study *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* Dick Hebdige suggests that the history of postwar youth culture in Britain could (and in fact should) be seen as a "succession of differential responses to the black immigrant presence in Britain from the 1950s onwards" (Hebdige 1979:29). These responses, however overtly or subtly articulated, supposedly provide one with a mapping of the British subcultural collective psyche. In as far as this view attempts to suggest a generally applicable underlying dynamic for the emergence of all of these subcultures, one feels hesitant to subscribe to Hebdige's point of view. However, the fact that basic human emotions and reactions can be articulated in various ways, that there is a plethora of possible outcomes, attracts one to this hypothesis. Hebdige pays particular attention to the case of the skinheads and their relationship with the ethnic minorities. The initial response to the black presence was that of identification and association, as Hebdige explains:

> [Those] values conventionally associated with white working-class culture ... which had been eroded by time, by relative affluence and by the disruption of the physical environment in which they had been rooted, were rediscovered embedded in black West Indian culture. Here was a culture armoured against contaminating influences,

> protected against the more frontal assaults of the dominant ideology, denied access to the 'good life' by the colour of its skin. Its rituals, language and style provided models for those white youths alienated from the parent culture by the imagined compromises of the post-war years. The skinheads, then, resolved or at least reduced the tension between an experienced present (the mixed ghetto) and an imaginary past (the classic white slum) by initiating a dialogue which reconstituted each in terms of the other (Hebdige 1979:57).

He continues:

> [The] most conspicuous sign of change (the black presence in traditionally white working-class areas) was being used by the skinheads to re-establish continuity with a broken past, to rehabilitate a damaged integrity, to resist other less tangible changes (embourgeoisement, the myth of classlessness, the breakdown of the extended family, the substitution of private for communal space, gentrification, etc.) which threatened the structure of the traditional community at a far deeper level (Ibid.: 57-58).

However, this level of identification between skinheads and Afro-Caribbeans could not be maintained. Reggae music (the music of the Afro-Caribbeans) became increasingly exclusive to blacks, as it alluded more and more to racial themes and Rastafarianism. Once again, Hebdige explains:

> As reggae became increasingly preoccupied with its own blackness, it began to appeal less and less to the skinheads who were gradually edged out at a time when the cycle of obsolescence had, as far as this particular subculture was concerned, almost run its course (Ibid.:59).

It is interesting to note the varying degrees of cooperation and identification between white and non-white groups that map the histories of these. It is therefore not surprising that Cross marks the 1958 race riots as the end of the Teds (Cross 1998:6), while Hebdige cites the summer of 1972, when skinheads "joined other white residents to attack second-generation immigrants", as a crucial date in their history (Hebdige 1979:59). The skinheads' realisation of difference and exclusion provided them with group solidarity, by means of the identification of an antithesis: an enemy. Punk's emergence as a subculture relied heavily on its ability to negate the ethnic distance

between white and black youths, as the skinheads had *initially* done. Whereas the skinheads' response to alienation was that of non-identification, punk's ability to transgress exclusion resulted in identification through emulation. Hebdige states:

> Just as the mod and skinhead styles had obliquely reproduced the 'cool' look and feel of the West Indian rude boys and were symbolically placed in the same ideal milieux... so the punk aesthetic can be read in part as a white 'translation' of black 'ethnicity' (Hebdige 1979:64).

He continues by demonstrating a correlation between punk rock and reggae music:

> [We] could say that punk includes reggae as a 'present absence' - a black hole around which punk composes itself. This can be extended metaphorically to wider issues of race and race relations (Ibid.:68).

Besides this aspect of punk's development, I would also like to posit that it had its origin in a conflation of various individual outputs, artistic and non-artistic alike, that began to reveal an inherent tendency towards chaos and subversion. Punk as a cultural movement was a point of articulation between individuals and the outside world. It provided not the narrative, but was itself a narration of personal lives unfolding in real time. It is thus a confluence of individual traits and not the homogeneous social disease it has been made out to be by Thatcherites, mothers, council members and Artist & Repertoire men. Hebdige's point of view is that:

> [Punk] was forever condemned to act out alienation, to mime its imagined condition, to manufacture a whole series of subjective correlatives for the official archetypes of the 'crisis of modern life': the unemployment figures, the Depression, the Westway, Television, etc. Converted into icons (the safety pin, the rip, the mindless lean and hungry look) these paradigms of crisis could live a double life, at once fictional and real. They reflected in a heightened form a perceived condition: a condition of unmitigated exile, voluntarily assumed (Hebdige 1979:65-66).

It will be quite clear in the rest of this thesis that punk culture and its subsidiaries of punk rock and punk fashion would remain peripheral in British society, at best.

5. PUNK AND PUNK ROCK

In the introduction to his *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock,* Dave Laing discusses a distinct difference between the treatments of the term "Punk" by Dick Hebdige and himself. He states:

> In *One Chord Wonders*, with very few exceptions, the word is always short for 'punk rock', a specific musical genre. But for Hebdige, music is only one part of a stylistic ensemble called 'punk', and judging by the limited space he devotes to it, not the most important part. That role is reserved for the visual display of what I have called ... the 'punk look' (Laing 1985:xi).

In this thesis, the use of the word "punk" without any appendices like "look", "dress", "rock", "culture", "style" or "scene" denotes "punk culture". "Punk scene" represents a particular embodiment of punk culture, with a given locality: typically therefore "London punk scene" or "Manchester punk scene". This encapsulates punk rock (which incorporates punk sound), as well as punk fashion (of which punk dress and punk look are subordinates). But where did the term "punk" come from?

5.1 The origin of the term "punk"

The origin of the term "punk" cannot be traced with exact certainty. What *can* be determined beyond all doubt is that the initial use thereof was derogatory - a term of defamation. In 1975 in the United States Legs McNeil and John Holmstrom published the first edition (cf. Figure 1.5) of a new fanzine, featuring a Lou Reed caricature on the front page. McNeil explains the origin of the title, *Punk*:

> Holmstrom wanted the magazine to be a combination of everything we were into - television reruns, drinking beer, getting laid, cheeseburgers, comics, grade-B movies, and this weird rock & roll that nobody but us seemed to like... So John said he wanted to call our magazine *Teenage News*, after an unreleased New York Dolls song. I thought it was a stupid title, so I told him that. And he said, 'Well, what do you think we should call it?' I saw the magazine Holmstrom wanted to start as a Dictators album come to life. On the inside sleeve of the record was a picture of the Dictators hanging

> out in a White Castle hamburger stand and they were dressed in black leather jackets. Even though we didn't have black leather jackets, the picture seemed to describe us perfectly - wise guys. So I thought the magazine should be for other fuck-ups like us. Kids who grew up believing only in the Three Stooges. Kids who had parties when their parents were away and destroyed the house. You know, kids that stole cars and had fun. So I said, 'Why don't we call it *Punk*?' The word 'punk' seemed to sum up the thread that connected everything we liked - drunk, obnoxious, smart but not pretentious, absurd, funny, ironic, and things that appealed to the darker side (McNeil 1996:253-254).

Another account of the same story gives mention of television shows like *Kojak* and *Beretta* in which mass murderers are referred to as "dirty [Punks]". McNeil continues by saying "It was what your teachers would call you. It meant that you were the lowest. All of us drop-outs [sic] and fuck-ups got together and started a movement. We'd been told all our lives that we'd never amount to anything. We're the people who fell through the cracks of the educational system" (McNeil, quoted in Savage 1992:131).

This phenomenon - taking pride in initial insult - is echoed by Hebdige's explanation of the word "punk" as a description of a subculture: "The word 'punk', like the black American 'funk' and 'superbad' would seem to form part of that 'special language of fantasy and alienation which Charles Winick describes (1959), 'in which values are reversed and in which 'terrible' is a description of excellence'" (Hebdige 1979:162). Accordingly a group of Lou Reed fans in Paris, France appropriated the name to call themselves *les punks* (Sabin 1999:12). The name was undoubtedly claimed with pride. But before punk had a name, before the Sex Pistols outraged the British public for the first time and long before the death of Sid Vicious by lethal overdose, a strange confluence of people and events in the urban dreariness of London's housing estates brought into existence a most extraordinary chapter in British cultural history.

5.2 The emergence of punk and punk rock

Punk and punk rock's emergence is mapped by Dick Hebdige as some sort of intertwining of existing subcultures and musical styles, thus:

> In London, especially in the King's Road, a new style was being generated combining elements drawn from a whole range of heterogeneous youth styles. In fact punk claimed a dubious parentage. Strands from David Bowie and glitter-rock were woven together with elements from American proto-punk (the Ramones, the Heartbreakers, Iggy Pop, Richard Hell), from that faction within London pub-rock (the 101-ers, the Gorillas, etc.) inspired by the mod subculture of the 60s, from the Canvey Island 40s revival and the Southend r & b bands (Dr Feelgood, Lew Lewis, etc.), from northern soul and from reggae (Hebdige 1979:25).

He continues:

> Glam rock contributed narcissism, nihilism and gender confusion. American punk offered a minimalist aesthetic..., the cult of the Street and a penchant for self-laceration. Northern Soul... brought its subterranean tradition of fast, jerky rhythms, solo dance styles and amphetamines; reggae its exotic and dangerous aura of forbidden identity, its conscience, its dread and its cool. Native rhythm 'n blues reinforced the brashness and speed of Northern Soul, took rock back to the basics and contributed a highly developed iconoclasm, a thoroughly British persona and an extremely selective appropriation of the rock 'n roll heritage (Ibid.:25-26).

A punk genealogy can be loosely constructed around these two references, but suggestions by a number of other authors make the punk "family tree" even more elaborate. McNeil and McCain see Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, Iggy Pop and the Stooges, Nico (Christa Paffgen) and Deborah Harry and Blondie and the various American proto-punk bands, such as the Ramones, as the forerunners of British punk rock (McNeil & McCain 1996:3-78). Dave Laing cites various pub-rockers, Ian Dury, Elvis Costello, Dr. Feelgood, Eddie and the Hot Rods, the Bay City Rollers, Alice Cooper, various glam-rockers (most notably David Bowie and Gary Glitter) and even John Lennon's Plastic Ono Band (Laing 1985:22-23). McKay goes as far as to suggest that Elvis Presley was the first punk (1999:57). According to Laing a certain intensity was given to the live performance by Dr. Feelgood and Eddie and the Hot Rods, while the American Alice Cooper's stage behaviour was characterised by outrage (Laing 1985:22).

Roger Sabin juxtaposes what he calls the "generally accepted view" of the origin of

punk with his own:

> The generally accepted view is that it originated in America, due to the existence there pre-1976 of bands such as Television and the Ramones and antecedents going back to the garage bands of the 1960s. Specifically, the start-point is usually given to be around 1973-74, and the place of origin New York (primarily due to the existence there of the club CBGB's). The look, the music, the *idea*, is then said to have been imported into Britain - with help from Malcolm McLaren. This has been the line taken by a number of high-profile histories (in book and TV form) in recent years. Yet, if we accept that one of the key defining elements of punk was an emphasis on class politics, then it could only have begun at one time and in one place - Britain in the late 1970s. For example, if we think of punk as an explosion caused by the bringing together of various unstable elements, then the UK's economic recession[3] during this period can be seen as the catalyst. This is not to say that the American bands (or McLaren) did not have an influence - of course they did. Just that the 'quality' of the experience in America was different, and much less politicised. It is self-evident, for example, that the New York bands, in contrast to their British counterparts, generally dealt in outrage for art's sake. (How far recent claims for America-as-starting-point amount to cultural imperialism is at least worth taking seriously) (Sabin 1999:3).

This last statement seems to hold at least some truth. American scholars, like Legs McNeil, Gillian McCain and George Gimarc are partial to the traditional view of punk having its roots in the USA, while Britons like Dick Hebdige, Paul Cobley, Jon Savage and Roger Sabin himself place rather less emphasis on the role America played. Sabin even goes as far as suggesting that France (which hosted the first ever punk festival in 1976 at Mont de Marsan) may have played an equally important role in spawning the punk movement.

However, the purpose of this thesis is not to champion British or French innovativeness, nor to defeat American cultural imperialist sentiment. It is unlikely that complete consensus regarding the matter of the origin of punk will ever be reached, and in a postmodern context it might be desirable to allow for a multivalent approach to so

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[3]Savage points out: "By July 1975, England was in recession. The unemployment figures for that month were the worst since the Second World War: school-leavers were among the most vulnerable. Not only had output shrunk, but public spending had risen to 45 per cent of the national income, and was threatening to unbalance the whole economy" (Savage 1992:108).

epigenetic a matter. Seen in its entirety, the punk movement may have its seat in various places, but certainly British punk is firmly situated in Britain. One can therefore infer that, since the scope of this thesis is on British punk rock, naturally Britain - and London[4] in particular - is a good place to start looking.

It is evident that the working-class suburban family home of the 1970s was not a congenial milieu for school-leavers. With unemployment figures reaching all-time highs the prospect of self-sustenance became an increasingly remote and unlikely one. And so the revolt, the representations of which are found in Anthony Burgess's (and later Stanley Kubrick's) *A Clockwork Orange* and Gideon Sams's *The Punk*, ensued, quite understandably. Punk was thus born from frustration with, and revolt against the very system that was created to provide better, more balanced lives for the working-class citizens. Punk's initial players were angry, disenfranchised young men.

In an interview conducted for the 1999 television documentary *The Winner Takes It All: The ABBA Story,* Malcolm McLaren, the 1970s art student-cum-shopkeeper and later Svengali of the Sex Pistols, explains the revolt at a very mundane level:

> You realise that ABBA represented everything you were going to hate. It seemed something that seemed to deny your purpose as a new generation, deny your point of view. And the thought that Mum and Dad might be whistling that tune in the bathroom of your suburban home, made you want to immediately commit arson of any sort (McLaren 1999, own transcription).

In a rather similar vein John Lydon (a.k.a. Johnny Rotten) of the Sex Pistols comments on the pre-punk music of the 1970s:

> There was no deep thought in it, merely images pertaining to something mysitcal, too stupid and absolutely devoid of reality. How on earth were we supposed to relate to

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[4]Paul Cobley wrote a noteworthy chapter "Leave the Capitol" (in Sabin 1999:170-185) in which he argues that the notion of London as punk's epicentre is the most insidious of many myths of punk rock. His accounts of punk happenings outside London illustrate his point quite soundly. These accounts remain, however, isolated at best. Focusing on London is not to deny the existence of punk scenes in other centres, but only to emphasise the most prominent events and players in punk history.

> that music when we lived in council flats? We had no money, no job, no nothing. So the Sex Pistols projected that anger, that rockbottom working-class hate (Lydon 1994:86-87).

It was at this point of conflict that many youths, including John Beverly (a.k.a. Sid Vicious) decided to leave home and return to the last remaining Victorian slums. Some were also thrown out by their parents on account of their rebelliousness, or, in the case of John Lydon, a cropped green hairdo! Being unable to sustain themselves, these punks moved to and fro between houses of their parents and run-down Victorian buildings with poor sanitation and a general aura of danger, backwardness and decline. From these slums emerged the downtrodden, undernourished punks to take up position in a place that became aptly known as the World's End - the King's Road.

Chelsea, and specifically the King's Road from Putney Bridge and Parson's Green to Sloane Square, is not serviced by the London Underground. Tube stations are few and far between, the result of which was a high pedestrian visibility on the street in the 1970s. Thus the King's Road, and specifically the area around number 430, where Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood had opened a clothing shop (cf. Figure 1.6) in the early seventies, became crowded with youths collectively dressed in a manner previously unseen anywhere. The shop went through various stages and guises, from "Let It Rock" to "Too Fast To Live Too Young To Die" to "Sex"[5] and finally to "Seditionaries". It was here that many of the early activities associated with punk took form and many plans and ideas were concocted. In fact, Jon Savage attributes the epigenesis of the London punk scene to the very existence of the physical space at 430 King's Road (Savage 1992:4). Hebdige comments:

> Punk reproduced the entire sartorial history of post-war working-class youth cultures in 'cut up' form, combining elements which had originally belonged to completely different epochs. There was a chaos of quiffs and leather jackets, brothel creepers and winkle pickers, plimsolls and paka macs, moddy crops and skinhead strides, drainpipes and vivid socks, bum freezers and bovver boots - all kept 'in place' and 'out of time' by the

[5]The Sex Pistols' name was conceived from their association with the shop when it was called Sex.

> spectacular adhesives: the safety pins and plastic clothes pegs, the bondage straps and bits of string which attracted so much horrified and fascinated attention... [Punk style] contained distorted reflections of all the major post-war subcultures (Hebdige 1979:26).

This look was most importantly an appearance created from the merging of "underground" and "above-ground" attire. Sexual fetish gear was brought into the open and worn as day-clothes[6]. The rich possibilities of allusion[7] were harvested, but the approach was frequently much more direct. T-shirts designed by Malcolm McLaren and worn by punks included one showing the hood of the Cambridge Rapist, with a music notation caption "It's been a hard day's night" and a tabloid report, "Brian Epstein - found dead Aug 27th 1967 after taking part in sado-masochistic practices/S&M made him feel at home" (quoted in Savage 1994:102). Another shirt (cf. Figure 1.7), depicting a homoerotic scene displaying nudity, resulted in the confiscation by the police of all unsold stock of the particular shirt in Sex, following a court case in which McLaren and Westwood were charged with public indecency. It is clear that punks, like the Teds before them represented a successful attempt to establish "a male working-class fashion with a symbolic rather than functional *raison d'être*" and to "cross the sartorial divide between functionality and performativity" (Cross 1998:7). This crossing of the divide is accurately represented by a photo caption by John Lydon: "Early 1976, before safety pins became fashionable and a moth-eaten sweater meant poverty, not popularity" (Lydon 1994:viii). Punk dress became and remained, however, a very self-conscious matter.

Although the commercial base for Sex was fetish and S & M gear (cf. Figure 1.8), T-shirts were a more affordable line, and one providing a large turnover for the shop. The embellishment of plain t-shirts with zips, tears, glitter, slogans, studs and even bits of motor tyres made them attractive to punk buyers. Naturally, many punks could not

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[6]Vivienne Westwood said in an interview, "The whole point of Sex is that we want to inspire other people with the confidence to live out their fantasies and to change. We really are making a political statement with this shop by attempting to attack the system. I'm also interested in getting people to wear some of our sex gear to the office. 'Out of the bedroom and into the streets!', now that would be really revolutionary!" (Westwood, quoted in Savage 1992:181).

[7]A favourite decorative method was the writing of a graffito or stencilling of slogans on clothing, with frequent quotes from pornographic magazines and even paedophilic sources.

even afford the designer t-shirts, and homegrown versions and emulations of the new trashy look became more and more innovative and increasingly common, as Zandra Rhodes remarks:

> The punk movement - with all its tears and safety pins - was a creative movement that started from the street, in the sense that actual youth were being creative with something that was within their price structure. The people who were so-called punk obviously weren't going into elegance; they went into a totally different direction (Rhodes, quoted in Lydon 1994:48).

This collective "antithesis of fashion", as Chrissie Hynde refers to punk dress (in Savage 1992:68), this "meta-trash" (Garnett 1999:18-19), made it visually and visibly very clear that a new subculture had been established. A group solidarity, however real or imagined, seemed evident in the way punks dressed. Eventually dress, behaviour, music, habits and the like would all become unmistakably identifiable as punk, as McLaren's "arson of any sort".

Roger Sabin describes punk in the following way:

> [Punk] is a notoriously amorphous concept. Yet, bearing in mind that words tend to mean 'what they've come to mean', we can work it backwards - in a sense - to try to fix certain essentials. Thus, at a very basic level, we can say that punk was/is a subculture best characterised as being part youth rebellion, part artistic statement. It had its high point from 1976 to 1979, and was most visible in Britain and America. It had its primary manifestation in music - and specifically in the disaffected rock and roll of bands like the Sex Pistols and the Clash. Philosophically, it had no 'set agenda' like the hippy movement that preceded it, but nevertheless stood for identifiable attitudes, among them: an emphasis on negationism (rather than nihilism)[8]; a consciousness of class-based politics (with stress on 'working-class credibility'); and a belief in spontaneity and 'doing it yourself' (Sabin 1999:2-3).

Guy Lawley identifies the "thematic concerns" of punk as "the rejection of hippy values,

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[8]Greil Marcus distinguishes between nihilism and negation on the grounds of their attitudes toward reality. He writes: "Nihilism is the belief in nothing and the wish to become nothing: oblivion is its ruling passion... [Negation] is the act that would make it self-evident to everyone that the world is not as it seems" (Marcus 1989:9).

the politics of Anarchy, an anti-authoritarian thrust, [and] the nihilistic rallying cry of 'No Future'" (Lawley 1999:100). Both Sabin's and Lawley's qualifications of punk themes and attitudes provide one with handy suggestions toward unlocking the British punk culture. What is more, they seem to slide and fit together in a complementary fashion. I shall therefore use these two guides as useful points of departure in describing some traits of the punk collective.

6. THE THEMATIC CONCERNS OF PUNK

From the attitudes and thematic concerns mentioned by Sabin and Lawley it is possible to distill three subsuming themes. They are Negationism/Rejection; Politics, Class and Ethnicity; and the DIY approach/Re-appropriation of value and meaning.

6.1 Negationism/Rejection

According to Phil Cohen the latent function of a subculture is "to express and resolve, albeit 'magically', the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture" (Cohen 1972:94). He continues:

> The succession of subcultures which this parent culture[9] generated can thus be considered so many variations on a central theme - the contradiction, at an ideological level, between traditional working-class puritanism and the new hedonism of consumption; at an economic level, between a future as part of the socially mobile elite or as part of the new lumpen proletariat. Mods, parkas, skinheads, crombies all represent, in their different ways, an attempt to retrieve some of the socially cohesive elements destroyed in their parent culture, and to combine these with elements selected from other class fractions, symbolizing one or other of the options confronting it (Ibid.).

For punk to construct a cohesiveness it was necessary first to expose and refute the fallacies inherent in the parent culture, and then to offer an alternative to these. Savage writes:

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[9]Cohen wrote this article with specific reference to the working-class community in the housing estates within the Greater London area of South East England.

> The whole idea of 'consensus' that had dominated postwar politics and social life was disintegrating: it was as though the whole postwar ideal of mass consumer enfranchisement fostered by Prime Ministers of both parties was being proved a sham. The bright colours, the 'classlessness', and especially the optimism of the sixties, now seemed like a mirage (Savage 1992:109).

The purpose, however, was not only to resolve the contradictions inherent in the parent culture, but also to reject and eradicate contradictions in the hippy ideology of the 1960s and the music industry itself. In order to do so, various routes were taken, like a new approach to aesthetics, indifference and even opposition to romantic love and peace, and a penchant for chaos, subversion and anarchy.

6.1.1 Punk and hippy ideology

In the 1970s, 1960s bands like The Who, Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and the Grateful Dead were still around and the music industry was still saturated with hippy ideology. Punks rejected the hippy belief in a peaceful transition to Utopia. Instead, they insisted that no future was possible without radical change (perhaps most potently stated in the Sex Pistols' "God Save The Queen" of 1977: "There's no future in England's dreaming"). The hippy ideology had to be eradicated. Thus the hippy hedonism of "sex and drugs and rock-'n-roll" was challenged by punk's excessive violence, pleasure derived from shocking the public, and more pleasure from disturbing the monotonous peace and subverting order and structure.

Gina Arnold writes: "What the Pistols and other punks wanted badly to achieve was an honest voice: a musical lack of pretense, and a sound that cried havoc with their friends and foes alike" (Arnold 1997:xi). Rock music had to be cleansed from all hippy allusions to love, romance and idealism. In British punk rock this meant attempting to make a clean break with American-dominated hippy rock. Vic Godard of Subway Sect explains:

> [What] I was trying to do with the songs was to change the way Rock songs were written. To pare it down, take out all the Americanisms. I didn't mind what went into the song, as long as the language was different: no 'Yeah"s and 'Baby"s (Godard, quoted

in Savage 1992:219).

Equally illuminative is Savage's description of the Sex Pistols' sound:

> With their sound alone, the Sex Pistols drove a wedge into the musical standards of the time. When production values were complex and smooth, the Goodman tapes[10] capture the group's live sound 'of broken glass and rusty razor blades'. When British vocalists sang with a mid-Atlantic[11] accent, Lydon's voice skated in and out of tune in a tone of bored sarcasm mixed with the Cockney stylings of Lionel Blair and David Bowie. And at the time when songs generally dealt with the pop archetypes of escape or love, the Sex Pistols threw up a series of insults and rejections, couched in a new pop language that was tersely allusive yet recognizable as everyday speech (Savage 1992:206).

It is clear that punk's reaction to existing rock and hippy culture meant an inversion of the aesthetic. Just as the punk movement took pride in the initial insult of their name, "punk", so punk rock decided to negate what was done before musically by inverting aesthetic norms and expectations.

6.1.2 The inverted aesthetic principle

Malcolm McLaren's reaction on hearing the music of the American proto-punk group New York Dolls in 1972 is a good example of what is meant by the inversion of the aesthetic:

> When [David] JoHansen eventually put the album on, Malcolm shrieked for him to take it off after a few minutes. It was awful, he thought, but so awful that it crashed through into the other side, into magnificence. Upon this inverted aesthetic his interest in pop was fully rekindled (Savage 1992:62).

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[10]During July 1976 Dave Goodman recorded seven Sex Pistols songs ("Anarchy in the UK", "Pretty Vacant", "Seventeen", "Satellite", "Problems", "I Wanna Be Me" and "Submission") on a four-track machine in a rehearsal room in Denmark Street, London.

[11]This term means "between Britain and the USA", "non-accented" like the music of ABBA and Queen.

This moment proved to be decisive in the course punk rock, or at least the punk rock of the Sex Pistols, would take. The principle of the *anti-* emerged in punk's singing and dancing, as these quotations illustrate:

- Lucy O'Brien of the Catholic Girls: "Although I could actually sing, I didn't want to sing - I wanted to be an anti-singer" (O'Brien 1999:196);

- John Lydon of the Sex Pistols: "They all bitched at the first rehearsals about how I couldn't sing, which was true. I still can't, and I don't really want to" (Lydon 1994:2); and "I still can't sing. My voice is an instrument of torture and that's good enough for me" (Lydon, quoted in Hibbert 1994:279);

- Dick Hebdige: "[The] pogo[12] was a caricature - a *reductio ad absurbum* of all the solo dance styles associated with rock music. It resembled the 'anti-dancing' of the 'Leapniks'" (Hebdige 1979:108);

- Jon Savage: "The whole idea of Punk... marked a process of deliberate *un*learning: a new pop aesthetic that delighted 'in Rock's essential barbarism (and the *worth* of its vulgarism)'" (Savage 1992:82); and

- Bernard Sumner of Joy Division: "I saw the Sex Pistols... They were terrible. I thought they were great. I wanted to get up and be terrible too" (quoted in Marcus 1989:7).

This "deliberate *un*learning" had certain technical implications. Many of the punk musicians could not really play their instruments very well, and in certain cases did not even so much as play them at all[13] - they were, in a sense anti-musicians. One of the points of difficulty with the Sex Pistols' first bass player, Glenn Matlock, was that he

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[12]The pogo was a dance strongly associated with punk events. It comprises jumping up and down in a very rigid state, like a pogo stick.

[13]Sid Vicious, the second bass player of the Sex Pistols taught himself to play in one night. During the Sex Pistols' final concert tour, in the USA, Sid was so heavily under the influence of heroin and alcohol that he did not play for long stretches of the performances.

could in fact play too well for the aesthetic aspiration of the band. The unlearning seems to be yet another inverted aesthetic principle in the punk milieu. Once again a few quotations shed some light on the subject:

- Gina Arnold: "'Without self-expression, there'd be no sense of self', and this is where punk rock comes in. In the beginning it was pure danger: telling a worn-out population of bored white kids that meaning supersedes skill and passion is more important than talent was Duchamp's *Fountain* all over again, only with electric guitars" (Arnold 1997:xi); and

- Jon Savage: "By the late autumn, [Siouxsie and the Banshees] were playing songs full of awkward twists, casual brutalities, mass-media trash, and the intense excitement of ambition outstripping ability" (Savage 1992:419).

Probably the purest form of this principle is found in a punk fanzine[14] artwork (cf. Figure 1.9) entitled "Play'in [*sic*] in the band... first and last in a series". It implies that the ability to play three chords on a guitar is sufficient technique to form a punk band. It must be observed at this juncture that many punk songs did in fact employ no more than three chords. However, a mere new aesthetic principle was not enough to bring about radical change in the music of the time. The ideas had to be solidified in a physical onslaught. Attention was turned to the music industry itself.

6.1.3 Punk and the music industry

The inversion of aesthetic norms eventually led to the gradual unrigging of the music industry, which was by that time controlled and dominated by about six giant record companies in the United States and Britain, with subsidiaries in Europe and other parts of the world. Not only did bands like Wire, Siouxsie and the Banshees and the Sex Pistols attempt to destroy and reconstruct rock music (Savage 1992:329, 220, 162), but they were taking on the industry itself, even if only metaphorically. Savage comments

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[14]Exactly which fanzine it was, remains uncertain. Hebdige claims it was *Sniffin' Glue* (Hebdige 1979:112), while Savage cites *Sideburns* as the original source (Savage 1992:281).

on the Sex Pistols' first rehearsal space (cf. Figure 1.10):

> Owned by Bill Collins, the space comprised an attic over a small ground floor rehearsal room, reached by a crumbling passage between numbers 6 and 8 Denmark Street. John liked it because it was dank and depressing; Steve Jones liked it because he now had a W1 address; Malcolm McLaren liked it because it was a kind of Trojan horse right in the heart of Tin Pan Alley, which had been the nub of English pop in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s (Savage 1992:125).

After the infamous interview on the *Today* television show, hosted by Bill Grundy, the Sex Pistols' trouble with their first record company, EMI, started. Once again, Savage comments:

> The whole scandal ruthlessly unravelled the media play that had been going on within Punk at the same time as it exposed the workings of the music industry. It was very unusual to see the 'faceless' men of media boardrooms pictured in the press, and this is one of the origins of McLaren's radical reputation: it seemed that the Sex Pistols were an enemy within, entering the music industry in order to expose it, in a textbook example of 'demystification' (Savage 1992:267).

Even the thinly veiled imagery of sexual conquest in the words of Johnny Green, the Clash's road manager, "I anticipated the tingle of excitement when I would plug my jack-plug into Agnetha's amp"[15] (Green 1997:12) amounts to a symbolic violation of the musical *status quo*.

The outcome of this attack on the music industry was twofold: first, the swindling of money by the Sex Pistols, who received two severance packages (from EMI and A&M Records) for no contractual work done at all; and second, the establishment of many smaller, independent record labels, resulting from the larger companies' resistence to punk bands. These "indie" labels had a greater rapport with the bands, and were shaped *around* the bands, so to speak, with Stiff Records' captions like "lo-fi production" and "mono enhanced stereo" as a good example of the further propagation of the

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[15]As the result of a liaison with ABBA's road manager, the Clash were able to use ABBA's PA system and sound equipment on their tour of Scandinavia.

inverted aesthetic principle.

6.1.4 Controversy, anarchy and hate

Punks sought attention by controversy. The shop assistant at Sex, Jordan explains her penchant for attention:

> I used to take real pride in the way I looked when I went to work... And whatever I wore at work, I wore on the train and I didn't wear a coat. I had a lot of trouble but what did I expect? Sometimes I'd get on the train and all I had on was a stocking and suspenders and a rubber top, that was it. Some of the commuters used to go absolutely wild, and they loved it. Some of the men got rather hot under the collar, paper on the lap (Jordan, quoted in Savage 1992:94-95).

Alan Jones, another employee at Sex, shares the next anecdote:

> We'd have all the sleazy old men coming in, pretending they wanted to have a look at the stuff, and they were desperate for Jordan to try it on... I didn't drink and I never took drugs then, so I posed. That was the way I had fun. People used to stop at the zebra crossing and we'd walk out and they'd go mad. That was the first time I realized how people must be noticing it. Jordan was amazing, she pushed it to the limit, and got away with it (Jones, quoted in Ibid.).

In a way most befitting, the Sex Pistols sealed their fate as England's most obnoxious and anarchic scapegoats on national television, during the interview with Bill Grundy. Within a few minutes they had churned out so many insults and expletives so as to ensure their place on virtually all the following day's tabloid front pages. The media frenzy only heightened their sense of anarchism, as they used every opportunity available to them to spark more controversy. Knowing they were disliked and loathed only reaffirmed their revolt against the parent culture. They were at once famous *and* notorious. The ensuing day-time radio bans, gig bans, tabloid banners, difficulty with record companies and physical abuse by Teddy Boys served as a confirmation of punk's effectiveness. And then there was the declaration by the Sex Pistols: "We're not into music, we're into chaos" (quoted in Savage 1992:152) that seemed to

represent the gist of what punk rock was about: Anarchy in the UK.

John Lydon writes:

> Chaos was my philosophy. Oh, yeah. Have no rules. If people start to build fences around you, break out and do something else. You should never, ever be understood completely. That's like the kiss of death, isn't it? It's a full stop (Lydon 1994:3).

It seems evident that chaos and anarchy lend a sort of faceless indemnity to the creator thereof. They separate him from accountability and reality, in fact they negate reality by confusion. Chaos has no borders, no traceable outlines and therefore undermines the consensual version of a *perceived* reality. A subverted reality is no more real than a created chaos. Hebdige writes:

> In punk, alienation assumed an almost tangible quality. It could almost be grasped. It gave itself up to the cameras in blankness, the removal of expression (see any photograph of any punk group), the refusal to speak and be positioned (Hebdige 1979:28).

The Sex Pistols were no exception. The group's press cuttings and handbills were collected and collated in press packs, for the use of journalists and record companies. Savage describes these packs:

> These press packs were like no others: printed in a variety of colours by Jamie Reid at the Labour Party Press at Peckham, there was no written manifesto, but a montage of vitriol, praise and indifference, reflecting both the confused response to the group and the group's wish not to be defined (Savage 1992:202).

The conflicting attitudes that are expressed by the press pack serve almost as a disclaimer, by which the group shows an unwillingness to be associated with just one fixed opinion. The confusion created by this is in keeping with the chaos that Lydon takes as his philosophy. This taken into account, as well as more aggressive manifestations of punk's anarchic tendencies, like the Lewisham riots, the Sex Pistols' gig on the river boat Queen Elizabeth on the Thames - any punk gig as a matter of fact -

it is clear that when punks *did* express something, it was not love. Guy Lawley refers to "1977s [*sic*] Summer Of Hate" (Lawley 1999:101), as opposed to 1969's "Summer Of Love", and this proves to be quite accurate. One of the quotations in the Sex Pistols press pack affirms this: "Teenagers from London's Shepherd's Bush and Finsbury Park: 'We hate everything'" (quoted in Savage 1992:162), as does a remark by Walters on Nottingham Forrest graffiti: "It used to be We Hate Pompey or We Hate Derby. Now it's just We Hate" (quoted in Ibid.). This type of hate was taken into the public sphere by Johnny Rotten, by writing "I hate" on his Pink Floyd t-shirt, as well as his rendition of a song by the Small Faces. He writes:

> Early on, the band wanted to do a song by the Small Faces. The lyrics went something like 'I want you to know that I love you, baby/I want you to know that I care'. Well, I couldn't have any of that, so I changed it to 'I want you to know that I hate you, baby/I want you to know I don't care/So happy when you're not around me/I'm so glad when you're not there'. The exact opposite seemed to work much better (Lydon 1994:90).

In another interview Lydon states:

> I think what I learned in the Pistols was that I never wanted to write a love song in my entire life: it was a daily battle in rehearsal rooms because that's what they insisted I should be doing. [Malcolm McLaren and Glen Matlock] always wanted me to write love songs. Always. Seriously, Malcolm wanted some kind of, like, naughty version of The Bay City Rollers and that's what Glen wanted with his Soho poof's ideas. I had no training, no nothing, so I had no fears. My subject matters would be not based on anything previous at all. That's the best way to be. Ignorance leaves you without fear. It is a wonderful tool (Lydon, quoted in Hibbert 1994:280).

Punk was not *about* love or *about* beauty - quite the opposite. It broke through the consensual, placid aesthetic by standing up and standing out. It denegrated love, consensus, beauty and classless equality as a sham, a dream and a calculated untruth. Its hate was directed towards the parent and hippy cultures, and eventually dispersed to just about everything.

6.2 Politics, class and ethnicity

One of the things punk grew disaffected with was Britain's political situation. The punk subculture did not support the government and likewise was not supported by it. Moreover, even though the queen is not the ruler and the royal family not the government, punk was supportive of neither. Since its inception punk displayed revolutionary and proletarian tendencies, with ideological roots that went back as far as the student uprising in France in 1968. It was also from this leftist uprising that punk borrowed its tendency towards anti-authoritarianism.

6.2.1 Situationism

In France the *Internationale Situationniste*, or Situationist International, became a strong proletarian driving force, with manifestations in literature, slogans and graphic art. In the punk contingent there were numerous links with art schools, among them: Malcolm McLaren attended various art schools, Adam Ant attended Hornsey, Glen Matlock attended St. Martin's, John Lydon attended Hackney and Kingsway College, Jamie Reid went to Wimbledon School of Arts and Sid Vicious studied at Kingsway College. It was also art schools that were most adamant to host punk concerts, even when pubs and clubs were hesitant to do so. Via the art schools the pro-Situ graphics and slogans made their way into the punk movement, with the Clash probably the most ardent advocates and Vivienne Westwood's shirt "Be Reasonable, Demand The Impossible" one of the most memorable garments of the time. How profoundly or superficially Situationist ideas were manifest in punk is still a debatable matter. Joe Strummer of the Clash comments on their clothing (cf. Figure 1.11):

> [Bernie Rhodes] probably suggested that we write words on our clothing: I never knew much about that Situationist stuff, still don't today, but that's where it came from (quoted in Savage 1992:235).

Contrary to this, John Lydon states:

> All the talk about the French Situationists being involved with punk is bollocks. It's

> nonsense! Now that really *is* coffee-table book stuff. The Paris riots and the Situationist movement of the Sixties - it was all nonsense for arty French students. There's no master conspiracy in anything, not even governments. Everything is just some kind of vaguely organized chaos (Lydon 1994:3);
>
> [If Situationism] was punk's secret history, then it was so secret that nobody told us (quoted in Pecorelli 1996:60); and
>
> A Situationist? Ooh no, no, certainly not that. No poncey Left Bank politics from Paris for me (quoted in Hibbert 1994:279).

It is possible that punk donned the paraphernalia of Situationist and Lettrist art and slogans (see for instance Jamie Reid's work for the Sex Pistols, cf. Figures 1.12, 1.13, 1.14 and 1.15), solely for their subversive *possibilities* and allusions, without really subscribing to their policies. This seems especially feasible when considered in the light of punk's treatment of another ideologically charged symbol: the Swastika.

6.2.2 Punk and racism

As Nationalist Socialism's most discerned ensign, the Swastika became the adornment of countless punks, including Siouxsie Sioux, Steve Jones, Sid Vicious, the members of Skrewdriver and many fans. McLaren and Westwood used the Swastika in their designs, especially for the "Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die" line. With the exception of Skrewdriver, Sham 69 and a few other isolated cases, punk was not known for racial prejudice or pro-Nazism. Hebdige's view on this matter is:

> [The] swastika was worn because it was guaranteed to shock. (A punk asked by *Time Out* (17-23 December 1977) why she wore a swastika, replied: 'Punks just like to be hated'.) This represented more than a simple inversion or inflection of the ordinary meanings attached to an object. The signifier (swastika) had been wilfully detached from the concept (Nazism) it conventionally signified, and although it had been re-positioned ... within an alternative subcultural context, its primary value and appeal derived precisely from its lack of meaning: from its potential for deceit. It was exploited as an empty effect. We are forced to the conclusion that the central value 'held and reflected' in the swastika was the communicated absence of any such identifiable

> values. Ultimately, the symbol was as 'dumb' as the rage it provoked (Hebdige 1979:116-117).

Savage concludes that the Swastika was a "good metaphor for obnoxious intent" (Savage 1992:64), that it made a "statement about how BAD you are" (Ibid.) and that it was an "anti-mums and anti-dads thing" (Ibid.:241). The use of the Swastika was "aesthetic and theatrical" (Ibid.:481) and worked towards "demystifying the symbol" (Ibid.:189; 242). John Lydon claims that he wore it "deliberately and disrespectfully upside down" (Lydon 1994:vii). It can thus be inferred that punks used the subversive and shocking *possibility* of the Swastika without *being* Fascist or Nazist themselves.

It must, however also be added that racism *did* find its way partially to punk, especially by means of the National Front, Britain's most prominent fascist party. Sabin demonstrates the precarious relationship between punk and racist ideologies in a chapter entitled "I won't let that dago by: Rethinking Punk and Racism" (1999:199-218). As an answer to "Rock Against Racism" and "Rock Against Sexism", both of which were closely associated with the punk scene, "Rock Against Communism" was formed in August 1979 by "Fascist sympathizers" (Laing 1985:141) within the punk contingent. Bands like Skrewdriver and Sham 69 are known to have had ties with the National Front. Asian immigrants, then grouped under the rubric "Pakis", were the main target of both the National Front (cf. Figure 1.16) and the fascist faction within punk, and "Paki-bashing" became commonplace.

Both Sabin (1999:204-206) and Hebdige (1979:58) suggest that punk's relationship with the Afro-Caribbean population was much more sound than with any other ethnic group. This notwithstanding, Hebdige describes the nature of this bond thus:

> Needless to say, the alliance between white and black youths was an extremely precarious and provisional one: it was only by continually monitoring trouble spots... and by scapegoating other alien groups ('queers', hippies, and Asians) that internal conflict could be avoided. Most notably 'paki-bashing' can be read as a displacement manouevre whereby the fear and anxiety produced by limited identification with one black group was transformed into aggression and directed against another black community (Hebdige 1979:58).

The existence of the bond between punk and the Afro-Caribbean community was due to what Hebdige calls a connection at a "deep structural level" and an ongoing "dialogue" between the two cultures (Hebdige 1979:29). It is therefore only natural that the "dread" of Rastafarianism and the musical influence of ska and reggae were absorbed and assimilated by punk and punk rock. The political agenda of reggae and Rastafarianism thus became incorporated into that of punk. However, at least one group, the Sex Pistols, refrained from affiliating themselves with one particular political movement or stance. Instead they used the imagery and regalia of a multitude of these, as Savage explains:

> There was a lot of discussion about anarchy that summer: Lydon was working up a set of lyrics to one of Glen's tunes. Vivienne set about making a parallel item of clothing. The resulting 'Anarchy' shirt was a masterpiece. Taking a second-hand sixties shirt, Westwood would dye it in stripes, black, red or brown, before stencilling on a slogan such as ' Only Anarchists Are Pretty'. The next stage was to stitch on more slogans: hand painted on rectangles of silk or muslin. These made explicit references to Anarchist heroes and to the events of 1968: 'Prenez vos désirs pour la réalité'; 'A Bas Le Coca Cola'[16]. The final touches were the most controversial. Small rectangular portraits of Karl Marx (from Chinatown) were placed on the side of the chest, and on the other, above the pocket or on the collar, was placed and (often inverted) flying swastika from the Second World War. To ensure that the message was received, the whole shirt was finished off by an armband which simply read 'Chaos'. The intention was the group should not be politically explicit, but instead should be an explosion of contradictory, highly charged signs.... The intention was clearly to deliver a political manifesto that avoided simplistic solutions. In this context, the use of Anarchist and Situationist slogans indicated the desire not to be easily labelled and a wish for change, of an intensity not usually associated with a pop group (Savage 1992:188).

Punk had the ability to express its discontent in a way that itself became a trademark. This ability lay in what Huxley calls a "highly recognisable corporate logo" (Huxley 1999:87). The innovativeness and creativity (that Zandra Rhodes so champions) gave punk its distinct feature: an attitude of "Doing It Yourself" - the DIY approach.

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[16]These slogans mean "Take your desires as reality" and "Down with Coca-Cola".

6.3 The DIY approach and the re-appropriation of value and meaning

In the same way that punk reassessed the value of the Swastika, it commodified other things, material and symbolic alike, to form part of an iconography that to this day remains closesly associated with the punk subculture. Perhaps the most striking and highly recognised of these symbols is the safety pin[17]. The re-appropriation of the pin happened over a period of time: it started as a mere commodity with a practical application – keeping diapers or clothing together. Initially, this was the purpose John Lydon used them for, as he explains:

> Everyone was wearing flares at the time. There was no way you'd get me into a pair of flares. I wore my trousers preferably baggy, tight at the bottom. Remember all those World War II old men's suits that they had at the secondhand clothes stores? I loved all that. The baggier and bigger, the better. But when you buy these old tatty things, they do tend to fall apart. So the safety pins were not decoration, but necessity. It was either that or the sleeve falls off (Lydon 1994:80).

Eventually the safety pin became a punk fashion accessory, worn as jewellery and as body piercings. It became more and more commodified in its new guise, as designer Zandra Rhodes designed clothes with a punk look. Rhodes states:

> Whereas some people might question how something like colored hair could be considered beautiful, I think some of the extreme punk with the points and the safety pins was so heavily designed, it was beautiful (quoted in Lydon 1994:197).

In these ways the safety pin came to represent punk. In a sense, the safety pin maintained its original meaning of keeping things together, even in punk. Lydon characterises his approach to punk dress as "rehashing all those awful pop star images, taking bits and putting it together. Bits like taking a Pink Floyd T-shirt. Once you add the words *I hate*, you've made it something completely different (1994:80).

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[17]Punk rock compilations on compact disc are still sold, many of them accompanied by an actual safety pin or pictures thereof. Sensitivity regarding anti-Semitism prevents the Swastika from being used, especially since the auctioning of Nazi regalia (mostly on the internet) has become an illegal practice worldwide.

The approach, of which Lydon's t-shirt is but one realisation, is rooted in selection and adaptation: selecting whatever is useful and subsequently adapting it to suit specific needs or purposes. Thus the punk movement was a bricolage of ideas and objects reamed from pre-existing things, but also renewed to form novel concepts and to make new allusions. Punk rock's diverse ancestry (that which Garnett transversely refers to as a "repository of stock rock 'n' roll prototypes (1999:28)) has already been discussed in this chapter; so has the synthesis of a dress code merged from subterranean and above-ground traditions of dress, to form a uniquely punk fashion protocol. Swastikas and safety pins became adornments, food colouring became hair dye, solvents became recreational drugs, fetishism became mundane and insulting nicknames were transformed into highly valued personas. It seems that punks took matters into their own hands in order to dictate their own fate. For instance, when the Sex Pistols had no instruments or sound equipment, Steve Jones simply stole other bands' equipment; when a Sex Pistols concert did not provide enough action and excitement, Vivienne Westwood created a near riot by slapping a girl for no reason at all; and when the music industry left Malcolm McLaren disaffected, he constructed a makeshift new way of doing music business.

Herein lay the allure of the DIY-approach. The aura of haste brought into being by the makeshift appearance of punk's simulacrum also meant that the message was important; that getting the message to the people meant more than the *means* of getting that message across.

An important component of the makeshift look is what became known as "ransom-note lettering" – the use of letters cut from different texts in various magazines, newspapers and books to form a new text. First used in a punk context by a South African girl, Helen Mininberg (later Helen Wallington-Loyd), according to McLaren (quoted in Savage 1992:201), this type of bricolage had been associated with freedom fighters and kidnappers who wanted to maintain a strong sense of anonymity. Hebdige refers to the "violence of [punk's] 'cut ups'" (1979:106), while Huxley writes: "The connotations of the blackmail type cut-up lettering are various. It implies an anonymous, criminal message, with a hint of threatened violence" (Huxley 1999:87). Once again, Jamie

Reid is a central player in the propagation of this image, his efforts culminating in a corporate logo for the Sex Pistols, comparable with that of ABBA (cf. Figures 1.17 and 1.18).

7. CLOSE

It is a characteristic of modern historiography that any endeavour to chronicle a sector of history tends to seek out continuity, coherence and the causal. The case of punk history is no exception. Authors like Hebdige, Marcus, Savage, McNeil and Arnold all wrote punk histories in terms of punk's figureheads and events surrounding them. Therefore, mutations and hybrids of punk's look, sound and ideas that resulted from the emulation of the figureheads do not always fall within the scope of these histories. Attention to coherence thus causes them to forfeit insight in the *in*coherent qualities of punk - the fact that there were in punk itself, as in the parent and hippy cultures, certain unresolved contradictions. Historiography tends to want to streamline punk culture as a self-conscious and calculated antithesis to the parent culture. However, a large part of coherence in punk culture stems only from the *idea* of its collective desire to be incoherent and inconsistent. Put in another way, the underlying dynamic of punk (in other words that which gives it coherence) was anarchy, but the reification of anarchism cannot ever be coherent. Anarchy defies coherence. Unfortunately, it seems inevitable that analysis wants to identify tenets and laws in punk. Sabin states:

> [Overall] the consideration of punk has been hamstrung by two things: the narrowness of the frame of reference (how many more times must we hear the Sex Pistols story?), and the pressures to romanticise (usually equating with seeing punk as a form of nostalgia). The aggregate result of this has been to solidify our notions of what went on during punk into a kind of orthodoxy - i.e., whenever we approach a new piece of writing on the subject, we think we already know what it meant (Sabin 1999:2).

In order to see form in the relative formlessness of punk, it might be useful to reiterate Sabin's words quoted earlier in this chapter:

> ['Punk'] is a notoriously amorphous concept. Yet, bearing in mind that words tend to mean 'what they've come to mean', we can work it backwards - in a sense - to try to fix

> certain essentials (Ibid.).

Punk is therefore reconstructed around the turning points in its history, like McLaren's visit to New York, the beginning of the "moral panic" (Hebdige 1979:142)[18], the Bill Grundy incident, Johnny Rotten's resignation from the Sex Pistols, the quasi-documentary film *The Great Rock 'n Roll Swindle* and the death of Sid Vicious. The spaces between these events are then filled in with doctrinaire observations about the drive behind it all. Admittedly, this sheds an enormous amount of light on punk, but also leaves many of the intricate details still bathed in obscurity.

It is with great insight that Sabin observes that:

> Philosophically, [punk] had no 'set agenda' like the hippy movement that preceded it, but nevertheless stood for identifiable attitudes (Sabin 1999:2-3).

This approach allows for discrepancies in punk culture, by seeing it not as a solidly cast object, but rather as a more loosely constructed subject. People were not constructed by punk - punk was constructed by people. Only after it had been conceived, it was able to assimilate people, still constantly growing and changing with them.

Sabin's earlier notion of punk being part youth rebellion and part artistic statement seems slightly flawed, in that punk culture was also partially dictated by a slightly older generation of angry or disgruntled souls, like Vivienne Westwood, Malcolm McLaren, Jamie Reid and Bernard Rhodes. By a mere consideration of their age and influence, this older group cannot really be included under the rubric of punk. They resemble dictators and caretakers more closely than they do youth rebels. It was within a framework provided by them that the punk scene was allowed to unfold, and allowed to take certain liberties, artistic and non-artistic alike. It is clear, however that the

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[18]Hebdige writes: "Although groups like London SS had prepared the way for punk throughout 1975, it wasn't until the appearance of the Sex Pistols that punk began to emerge as a recognizable style... [It] wasn't until the summer of 1976 that punk rock began to attract critical attention, and we can date the beginning of the moral panic to September 1976 when a girl was partially blinded by a flying beer glass during the two-day punk festival at the 100 Club in Soho" (Hebdige 1979:142).

framework provided by these caretakers proved to be too restrictive for the Sex Pistols, and Johnny Rotten in particular, to operate in. The resultant friction, the eventual break-up of the band and the ensuing legal battle between Lydon and McLaren demonstrate the extent to which the four youths were in fact exploited by McLaren in a ploy to promote his shop and to increase his personal bank balance. It must not be forgotten that most punks, including the bands, were still teenagers during the punk period 1976 to 1979. It is almost certain that a degree of impressionability in them made them particularly susceptible to manipulation by people like McLaren and Westwood. It is therefore impossible to analyse punk culture, and consequently punk rock, without taking into account a certain degree of calculation by these parties. If punk was at all teleological, it was so in the minds of its caretakers.

It must also be understood that the artistic output was itself graded: not all punks were punk rockers, not everybody played in punk bands and not all punk bands were pioneers. There are different levels at which the punk culture operated, ranging from almost passive consumers, to part-time punks (who only took on a punk identity half or part of the time), to copy-cat punks (who only wore punk attire in order to create the illusion of being punks), to the genuinely influential icons, like the Sex Pistols, the Clash and the Banshees. However, even the figureheads were often constructed caricatures: Johnny Rotten was *not* John Lydon, Sid Vicious was *not* Simon Berverley, Lora Logic was *not* Susan Whitby and Poly Styrene was *not* Marion Elliot. The private and public personas of these people were most frequently incongruent. Compare, for instance, two photographs of Steve Jones and Paul Cook of the Sex Pistols (cf. Figures 1.19 and 1.20): one is a publicity picture, the other was taken on the street only after agreement was reached that it would not appear in the press (Jones and Cook did not want their fans to see them dressed like that). Besides the difference in dress, the body language suggests two very different attitudes.

Despite punk's pretensions to a Year Zero with the advent of punk rock, it was unable to sever all links with rock-'n-roll history. Siouxsie and Sid's parodies of existing rock songs only re-establish ties with tradition. And although the Sex Pistols did not want to be treated like rock stars, they still capitalised on all the media hype and free publicity

they could get. *Officially* they were not in it for the money, yet they managed to earn quite a lot from EMI, A&M and Virgin, and even sued McLaren for damages - a case the band members eventually won in 1986. In this respect Gina Arnold writes:

> Of course, as numerous pundits pompously pointed out, the Sex Pistols were doing it for the money. But then, Greil Marcus's assertions about art and situationalism notwithstanding, that's why they did it in the first place. As weird and groundbreaking as they may have looked, the Pistols were always just another classic case of guys whose lives were saved by rock 'n' roll. Like Elvis and the Beatles and Bruce before them, they used the genre to better their socioeconomic position: to escape from the grim and pointless confines of a London council flat, bad beer, dingy stairwells, and the dole (Arnold 1997:xii-xiii).

It seems most befitting then that McLaren's *The Great Rock 'n Roll Swindle* had the slogan "Cash From Chaos" printed on its promotional LP sleeve. If the generation of money was the goal, it was only so for the bands themselves. Ordinary punks still did not better their own socioeconomic circumstances and remained as they were: unemployed and penniless.

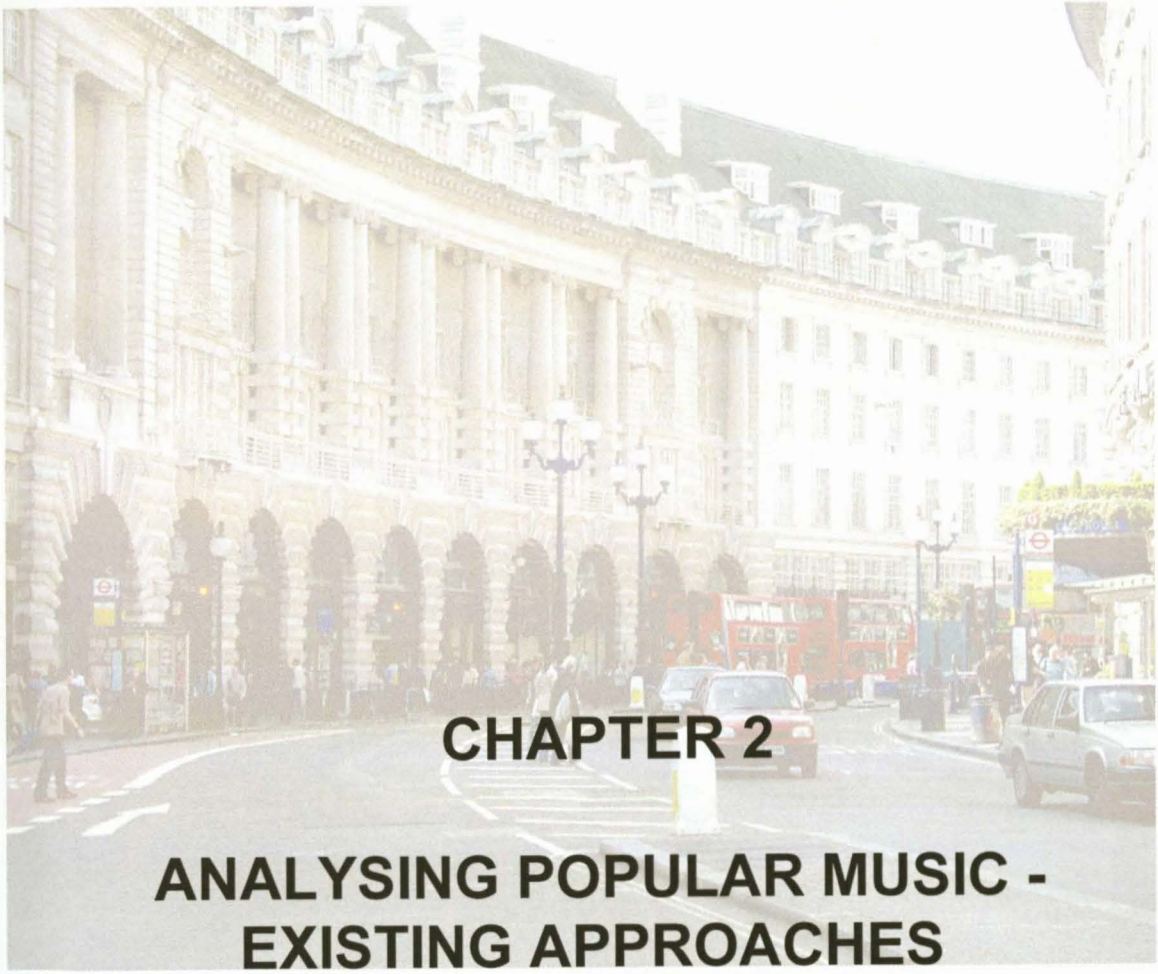
It would be fallacious to deem the punk subculture as aimless. What does transpire, however, is that the goals of punk were never really long-term. Punk, like Dada, invested tremendous effort in its present moment, with little thought about its future. The haste and immediacy with which its simulacrum was produced, as well as its own short-livedness, made of punk a fleeting moment in Britain's history. It seems punk carried within it the seeds of its own demise all along.

It is conceivable that it was punk's lack of a philosophic agenda and its inability to plan that caused it to lose cohesiveness in the end. Although it attempted to provide a viable alternative to mainstream British culture, this alternative could not successfully replace "Englishness", as patriotism and British self-esteem gradually gained momentum when Margaret Thatcher assumed leadership of the country. Whereas conservatism placed emphasis on the functional aspect of things, it seems punk was more concerned with the performative. As the most conspicuous elements of its performativity (the dress, hairstyles and body altering) were assimilated by the media and tourist industry, as punk

became a media and tourist attraction, it lost its clout and its authenticity. Robert Garnett writes:

> [The] moment of punk passed not simply because it was recuperated, reified or processed by the culture industry, it passed because the space within which it operated was closed down... After the space within which it existed was closed down, things like 'Anarchy' simply couldn't be made anymore, and nothing like it, nothing with the same gravity, nothing so abject has been made since (Garnett 1999:17-18).

Despite numerous attempts to revive the First Wave of punk, this period in history remains closed. Our only link with it today is through the observation of the few remnants of its cultural and musical footprint.



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CHAPTER 2

ANALYSING POPULAR MUSIC - EXISTING APPROACHES

2

INTRODUCTION

In the latter half of the twentieth century and even now, at the beginning of the twenty-first, it has become almost customary for serious academic discourse on popular music to open with some sort of statement about the state of the musicology of pop. These fall roughly into two groups, the one being about the relative newness of pop and rock musicology, the other about traditional or classical musicology's snubbing of popular music and the study thereof. Richard Middleton writes:

> Popular music is everywhere. It is at the centre of several crucial arguments concerning the nature of music, of culture and of modern society. Yet, despite encouraging developments in recent years, the study of popular music has hardly got under way. Traditional musicology still largely banishes popular music from view because of its 'cheapness', while the relatively new field of cultural studies neglects it because of the forbiddingly special character of music (Middleton 1990:v).

He continues at a later stage of the same publication:

> Musicology, then, is clearly a science which, above all others, should study popular music. With a few exceptions (mostly recent), it has not done so. As a general rule works of musicology, theoretical or historical, act as though popular music did not exist. Sometimes it is explicitly condemned, as light, crass, banal, ephemeral, commercial or whatever; and sometimes it is patronized: all right in its way (for other people, that is) but not worth *serious* attention. Occasionally it is admitted to academia but shuffled sideways: very important but really a matter for sociologists rather than musicologists. And now and then it is actually taken seriously but misunderstood, through the application of inappropriate criteria, either negatively (Adorno) or positively (as when the Beatles are compared to Schubert, a comparison which tells us very little except about the process of *legitimation* being operated) (Ibid.:103).

Allan Moore affirms this notion with his statement, "Rock is now well into its third decade (the term was first coined around 1967) and is still, at the detailed level, largely unstudied" (Moore 1993:1). This sentiment is shared by Philip Tagg, who wrote in 1982[19]:

> One of the initial problems for any new field of study is the attitude of incredulity it meets. The serious study of popular music is no exception to this rule. It is often confronted with an attitude of bemused suspicion implying that there is something weird about taking 'fun' seriously or finding 'fun' in 'serious things' (Tagg 1982/2000:71).

It might be argued that we are now twenty years down the line from Tagg's remark, and that there has been a lot of change in popular music research since then. However, it is still not uncommon to find these types of statements in opening gambits of serious writing, as chapters by John Covach and Nadine Hubbs in two relatively recent readers[20] prove:

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[19]This article was initially published in *Popular Music* Volume 2, but reproduced in *Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music* in 2000.

[20]Covach's "Popular Music, Unpopular Musicology" was included as Chapter 20 in *Rethinking Music* and Hubbs's "The Imagination of Pop-Rock Criticism" is Chapter 1 in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays.*

> The situation with regard to popular music presents far more of problem [*sic*]. It seems self-evident that musicology has tended to ignore popular music, and particularly rock and country and western music, despite the fact that popular music has at various times played an important role in the art-music tradition, especially in the twentieth century (Covach 1999:454);

and

> Pop-rock music is an enormously potent cultural discourse whose influences reach into diverse categories of gender and sexuality, generation, class, and ethnicity. Critical discourse concerning rock and pop, up to very recently, has come primarily from two sources: journalistic writers, and academic critics working in such fields as sociology, cultural studies, and media studies. Academic music studies, the disciplines of musicology and music theory, have concerned themselves almost exclusively with art music, and have begun only in the recent past to forge any appreciable engagement with popular music; this is both a rapidly growing area of music scholarship, and one that is still in its infancy (Hubbs 2000:3 - 4).

In spite of all these statements, if one looks at what has been produced in the field of popular music research, it becomes clear that a canon of landmark publications through the decades has been established, ranging from Adorno's "On Popular Music" of 1941, to Wilfred Mellers's *Twilight of the Gods: The Beatles in Retrospect* of 1973, to Simon Frith's *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* of 1983, Richard Middleton's *Studying Popular Music* (1990), Allan Moore's *Rock: The Primary Text* (1993, and part of the series *Popular Music in Britain*) and a proliferation of journal articles and readers, including *Expression in Pop-Rock* (2000) and *Reading Pop* (2000). Since 1981 Cambridge University Press has published three volumes per annum of the *Popular Music* journal, engaging with virtually every conceivable aspect of popular music.

Even within work on punk and punk rock a staple of noteworthy writing and worthwhile reading exists, beginning with Dick Hebdige in 1979 (*Subculture: The Meaning of Style*) and subsuming writing by Greil Marcus (*Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* of 1989 and *In the Fascist Bathroom: Punk in Pop Music 1977 - 1992* of 1993), Dave Laing (*One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock*

of 1985), Jon Savage (*England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond* of 1992), Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain (*Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* of 1996) and the reader *Punk Rock: So What?* (1999), edited by Roger Sabin.

However, to echo Middleton and Hubbs, a very large portion of academic writing on popular music has happened *outside* musicology, in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, linguistics, semiotics, philosophy and so forth. A further cause for perturbation is the tendency within musicology to apply existing models of music analysis to popular music with little or no regard for the possibility (or fact) that the aesthetic value and meaning of popular music may be seated in other musical aspects than that of Western art music. As quoted earlier, Middleton posits that this problem is the result of the "application of inappropriate criteria" (Middleton 1990:103) to popular music. Although I agree with the principle that the methodology and the music (in this case popular music) should be compatible, I would suggest that the methods ("criteria" in Middleton's terminology) are not at fault. They have proved highly effective when used in the analysis of Western art music, and many popular music analyses have even demonstrated their effectiveness. However, the problem is the often reckless and unsympathetic *wholesale* application of these methods to all popular music, when it is clear that much popular music calls for different analytical approaches. The suggestion here is therefore that the type of music that is analysed should determine the preferred analytical model, in order to ensure the most favourable yield of analytical results. Whereas a purely structural analysis of a Beethoven sonata may yield sufficient information regarding its inherent meaning, a protest song by Bob Dylan may rely more heavily on contextualisation and textual analysis. Rose Rosengard Subotnik writes the following:

> Critics sometimes complain that authors of studies based on [the] assumption of social intimacy [with music] are not really interested in music but rather in philosophy or anthropology or some other 'extrinsic' discipline. This criticism is actually two-pronged in that it reveals an insistence on the autonomy not only of music but also of musicology, which positivists tend to see as an extension of the autonomous domain of music itself. As to this latter notion, I would say it is deceptive, for positivist

> musicologists do not derive their methods of study from the music they study any more often than serious contextualists; on the contrary, as I hope to show, they do it less. The real objection here, I believe, is not that contextualists violate the autonomy of musicology as a strictly musical undertaking but that they look to the wrong outside disciplines for help - to philosophy and anthropology rather than to a positivistically conceived model of science (Subotnik 1989:106).

Although the focus of this statement is on the question of autonomy or heteronomy of musicology, it poses a secondary question of whether the methodology can or should be tailored according to the type of music that one wishes to analyse. The degree to which the chosen methodology contextualises the music may vary from popular to art music, or from opera to chamber music - this can be accepted as given. More importantly, the analytical methods may vary in terms of more than just contextualisation (as opposed to positivistic analysis). These methods, I believe, are determined by the various loci of meaning in music. Analysis is, after all, an attempt to discover or understand *how* meaning in music comes about, or *where* such meaning is located. Whereas meaning in art music is frequently found in its structure or the composer's use of harmonic devices, popular music's meaning lies in other places or things - the structure and harmony are not as meaningful in punk rock as they are in Mozart, for instance. The purpose of this chapter is to locate, within the field of study, a method of analysis that could be applied to punk rock. This will be done by surveying existing analytical approaches, gleaning from them methods that will be of use, and fusing them innovatively to create an analytical approach that will be useful in punk rock analysis, but could be equally applicable to other forms of popular music. As the first step in the described process, here now follows a brief discussion of some existing methodologies of popular music study.

1. APPROACHES THAT ORIGINATE IN EXTRA-MUSICAL DISCIPLINES

Methodologies that have their roots in extra-musical disciplines normally view music not as removed from the social context, but rather focus on aspects of the music that are subject to forces of society, sexuality, economy, and so forth. An overview of these approaches cannot (for the scope of this thesis) give an account of all existing ones, but

what follows below gives an indication of the different angles from which popular music has been studied up to now.

1.1 Sociology and cultural studies

Theodor W. Adorno's largely neo-Marxist approach to popular music arose from his attention to social structure, economic matters and the subsequent standardisation of mass-produced music. Adorno's concern was with the musical structure as resultant manifestation of the economic basis of society. This further prompted him to the axiological comparison between popular music and the compositions of classical masters like Beethoven, wherein he found popular music to be inferior. According to the Adornian view, the result of the mass production of commodified popular music is the standardisation thereof - different songs are seen as "pseudo-individualization[s]" of stock musical patterns and structures (Adorno 1941:208). He writes:

> The whole structure of popular music is standardized, even when the attempt is made to circumvent standardization. Standardization extends from the most general features to the most specific ones. Best known is the rule that the chorus consists of thirty-two bars and that the range is limited to one octave and one note. The general types of hits are also standardized: not only the dance types, the rigidity of whose pattern is understood, but also the 'characters' such as mother songs, home songs, nonsense or 'novelty' songs, pseudo-nursery rhymes, laments for a lost girl. Most important of all, the harmonic cornerstones of each hit - the beginning and end of each part - must beat out the standard scheme. This scheme emphasizes the most primitive harmonic facts no matter what has harmonically intervened. Complications have no consequences. This inexorable device guarantees that regardless of what aberrations occur, the hit will lead back to the same familiar experience, and nothing fundamentally novel will be introduced (Adorno 1941:202 - 203).

Although one does not necessarily always agree with all of Adorno's principles, his dialectic view of popular music (and the industry that exists around it) did initiate serious thought on it. For decades of music research Adorno represented the touchstone of

popular music scholarship and his influence remained felt for a very long time[21].

In spite of the phenomenon that the sociological study of popular music is seldom concerned with the sounding matter itself, there have been some exceptions. Some more recent sociological studies have attempted to reveal information about the character of the music itself, as stated here by Rose Rosengard Subotnik:

> For me ... the notion of an intimate relationship between music and society functions not as a distant goal but as a starting point of great immediacy ... It functions as an idea about a relationship which in turn allows the examination of that relationship from many points of view and its exploration in many directions. It is an idea that generates studies the goal of which (or at least one important goal of which) is to articulate something essential about why any particular music is the way it is in particular, that is, to achieve insight into the character of its identity. This process involves decisions (which can never be definitive) as to what constitutes the significant ways in which this music differs from other forms, even related forms, of human expression (Subotnik 1989:105 - 106).

However, in many instances it has succeeded only in highlighting the fact that a relation exists between music and society, even though that relation may be expressed in a way that seems to hold promise of revealing something about the nature of music, as this diagram by Dunbar-Hall illustrates (1991:130):

MUSIC denotes STYLE
connotes SUBCULTURE
denotes LIFESTYLE
connotes BELIEFS

This appears to be rather vague and really only sums up what has been done in the first chapter of this thesis. No information regarding how the relations between music and

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[21]Simon Frith writes "Adorno's is the most systematic and most searing analysis of mass culture and the most challenging for anyone claiming even a scrap of value for the products that come churning out of the music industry" (Frith 1978:195), while Richard Middleton comments "The flaws, if such they are, are in the physiognomy of a giant. Anyone wanting to argue the importance of studying popular music has to absorb Adorno in order to go beyond him" (Middleton 1990:35).

people find expression in music, or in which aspects of the music these are articulated. Another point of criticism is the strong sense of hierarchy that it suggests, through the system of connotation and denotation. The Adornian view, for instance, would challenge the specific order of "lifestyle" and "beliefs" in the diagram, contending that the beliefs are a result of the lifestyle, which in turn is a result of the economic substructure and the balance of power and elite in a given society. Although it is clear that relations do exist between music, style, subculture, lifestyle and beliefs, the hierarchical representation here presents various limitations on the dynamics of those relations, when in fact they could (or should) be seen as a network of multi-stranded interrelations, for instance between lifestyle and beliefs, beliefs and subculture, subculture and music, music and beliefs, and so on. Dunbar-Hall's diagram is also lacking in both detail and specificity. Therefore, it can only be generally, or even partially valid. It may also force the analyst to make certain unqualified assumptions about the music, the style, the subculture, and the subculture's lifestyle and collective belief system. If I instantiate, using the example of punk, the diagram looks like this:

PUNK
ROCK denotes PUNK STYLE
connotes PUNKS
denotes PUNK
LIFESTYLE
connotes PUNK
BELIEFS

In order to explain the process, this diagram can be turned upside-down. Therefore, collective beliefs (if indeed there are such beliefs) of punks will lead them to have a certain collective lifestyle[22] (in the tenements, for instance, hanging around the King's Road during the day, being violent and destructive, etc.). These people are collectively known as "Punks" and form the punk subculture. They have developed, and enjoy,

[22]Marxist and neo-Marxist scholars would argue here that it is the *initial* lifestyle, that is of punks living with their parents in council estates, that causes punks to have a certain belief system, which in turn prompts them to leave home and adopt a new lifestyle in the squats.

music of a certain style - the punk rock style, which is a subordinate of the rock style and has a mixed lineage (see page 15 of Chapter One). This style is then materialised as specific punk songs, albums and performances. Still, this explication does not reveal anything about the punk rock of (say) the Sex Pistols or The Clash, let alone anything about "God Save The Queen" or "White Riot".

Another much-taken sociological approach has been that of reception, or the reasons for listeners' involvement in music. A good case in point is G.H. Lewis's survey[23] of the reasons for involvement[24] in popular music. His findings are presented in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 (1980:235 - 236):

Table 2.1: REASON FOR INVOLVEMENT BY RACE (by %)

	Asian	Black	Mex.Amer.	White	Total
Artist	11	10	10	07	08
Message	28	33	32	33	33
Beat	27	31	29	19	23
Tune	29	17	21	29	27
Solos	06	09	08	12	11

Table 2.2: REASON FOR INVOLVEMENT BY SEX (by %)

	Male	Female	Total
Artist	07	10	08
Message	25	41	33

[23]The survey was conducted in 1979 in an urban Californian county among 2 950 school-going or other youths.

[24]Lewis writes, "To measure their reason for involvement, they were asked what the *most* important thing was in their liking a song - did they like the artist, the message in the lyrics, the beat, the tune or the instrumental solo parts" (Lewis 1980:231).

Beat	25	21	23
Tune	27	24	27
Solos	16	05	11

This seems to conclude nothing about the music - all music involved in the study was presumably performed by an artist, and had a message, a beat, a tune and solos. The various responses are (surprisingly) uniform, with the only noteworthy anomalies in the patterns being males' (presumably especially white males') partiality to solos and females' preference for the message in the lyrics. However, the value of this approach, and what Lewis does show, is the listeners' reception of and reaction to the music. This says something about the dominance or memorability of certain aspects of the music, that is the pertinence of its signifiers, which leads to the next category of discussion.

1.2 Semiotics, linguistics, cognition and gesture

Work done by Mukařovsky, Eco, Nattiez, Gino Stefani, Middleton and others has emphasised music's role as a multiparameter code-bearing phenomenon. Whereas sociology and cultural studies are concerned with the relation between society and music, body-derived gesture and cognition study the relation between music and the mind, or music and the mind/body system[25]. Andrew Mead explains the profound impact that music has on the mind/body as a result of the listener's "musical consciousness[26]" (Mead 1999:1-2). This consciousness, according to Mead, is a consequence of the fact that a considerable part of a person's engagement with music has to do with a sense of how the music is performed. The experience associated with

[25]Some of the concepts and terminology used in the study of cognition and gesture also originate in linguistics, for instance in the work of Chomsky.

[26]Mead's article begins with an account of his experience during a performance by the oboist Harry Sargous. Mead had found himself out of breath, experiencing discomfort, and then discovered that he had been inhaling in sympathy with the performer, who at that moment had switched to circular breathing. The physical discomfort was a result of what he calls "a physical embodiment of something that had been lurking at the edges of [his] musical consciousness" (Mead 1999:2).

this is then called *kinesthetic empathy*[27]. In a rather similar vein, Cusick states:

> Music, an art which self-evidently does not exist until bodies make it and/or receive it, is thought about as if it were a mind-mind game. Thus when we think analytically about music, what we ordinarily do is describe practices of the mind (the composer's choices) for the sake of informing the practices of other minds ... We end by ignoring the fact that these practices of the mind are nonpractices without the bodily practices they call for - about which it has become unthinkable to think (Cusick 1994:16).

This mind-mind process of articulation has been studied exhaustively by a number of scholars, in traditional analysis. However, in the fields of semiotics, cognition and linguistics it is not necessarily the composer's choices that are studied, but rather the transmission of short and longer sets of code. The choices are thus codified as either very short *musemes*[28] or slightly longer, more discursive codified sets. Jonathan Dunsby and Arnold Whittall's analysis[29] of the English anthem, "God Save The King/Queen" has been much publicised and is very well known. An analysis of the same work has been performed by Kofi Agawu (Agawu 1999:147 - 153). In these analyses it becomes clear that there exists a hierarchy of codes that vary in length. Shorter code sets (like musemes) - *signs* in Agawu's language - are normally subsumed by longer ones, which are in turn subsumed by even longer ones. The result is various levels of signification, called "signs", "units", "paradigms" and so forth (Ibid.).

For a musical communication to be received successfully, it is important for the listener

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[27]According to Mead, the listener's understanding of the music is grounded in an understanding of the physical force or strain required to produce any musical tone or effect. Examples of these are the physical force required to play *forte* or *piano*, the tension of the vocal chords that corresponds with the production of a certain pitch, and the like.

[28]This is a term coined by Philip Tagg by analogy with the morpheme in regular syntactical semiotics. Tagg's definition of a museme is "the basic unit of musical expression which in the framework of one given musical system is not further divisible without destruction of meaning" (Tagg 1979:71), i.e. musical figures, for instance. According to Tagg these musemes may be subdivided into "component parts which are not in themselves meaningful within the framework of the musical language ... but are nevertheless basic elements (not units) of musical expression which, when altered, may be compared to the phonemes of speech in that they alter the museme (morpheme) of which they are part and may thereby also alter its meaning" (Ibid.), i.e. single notes, articulation, accentuation, etc..

[29]For this analysis, see Dunsby & Whittall 1988:223 - 225.

28 November 2006to be able to understand the system of signs. Two issues are important here: pertinence and competence (Middleton 1990:173). Competence entails the listener's ability to decode or decipher music, which is by its nature coded. Pertinence has to do with the type and level of encoding which is used by the artist in a given work or song. The codes vary in type and strength. Strictly musical codes include pitch organisation, chord structure, rhythm, timbre, tessitura, phraseology, and so on; and then there are codes that emanate from schemes such as the ones governing movement, gesture[30], rhetoric, affect, or ones that hail from the realms of theatre, dance, linguistics and so forth. Regarding the strength of codes Richard Middleton writes:

> [C]odes may vary in *strength*. That is, the patterns they organize may be familiar and predictable - heavily coded - or they may be rather ambiguous and unpredictable - subject to weak or newly invented codes. At one extreme, pieces may create their own individual codes (this is more typical in avant-garde music); at the other extreme, a piece may be so tightly bound to socialized conventions as to be 'about' its code ... Historically this distinction is associated with the growing divergence, from the nineteenth century, between increasingly 'autonomous', aesthetically-orientated 'art' music and more 'conventional', functionally-orientated 'popular' music (Middleton 1990:173).

Along the same lines, but using a different set of terminology, Umberto Eco distinguishes between text-orientated styles and grammar-orientated styles (Eco 1979:137). A text-orientated style constructs codes that may be incomplete or ambiguous, from a magazine of undercoded texts, while a grammar-orientated style derives overcoded texts from an already-existing system of rules and conventions. "Undercoded" is explained as being sparsely coded, so that "individualized aspects of a piece - seemingly uncoded - are received within a general sense of 'understanding'" (Middleton 1990:173). "Overcoded" is the opposite, where music is so laden with codes that "every detail is covered by a network of explicit codes and subcodes" (Ibid.). Another way of putting this is that overcoded music has a higher pertinence, while

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[30]Richard Middleton identifies certain stock patterns of gesture found in music, like harmonic riffs, symmetric phrases and stock melodic contours, like arch, axial, chant, oscillating, terraced and open/closed (Middleton 1990:207).

undercoded music has a lower pertinence. Middleton identifies nine levels of code "for popular music"[31]:

- *Langue*: a general Western music code, governing the territory, roughly speaking of functional tonality (starting, that is, about the sixteenth century and still largely current today);
- *Norms*: e.g. the mainstream conventions *c.* 1750 - *c.* 1900, or those governing the post-1900 period; within these
- *Sub-norms*: Victorian, jazz age, 1960's, etc.; and
- *Dialects*: e.g. European, Euro-American, Afro-American; within these
- *Styles*: music hall, Tin Pan Alley, Country, rock, punk, etc.; and
- *Genres*: ballad, dance-song, single, album, etc.; within many of these
- *Sub-codes*: e.g. within rock, rock 'n' roll, beat, rhythm and blues, progressive, etc.; and
- *Idiolects*: associated with particular composers and performers; within these
- *Works and performances* (Middleton 1990:174).

Gino Stefani provides another, equally sophisticated hierarchy of intra- and extra-musical levels. They are *Musical Techniques* (MT)[32], *Styles* (St) and *Opus* (Op) (Middleton's nine levels are subsumed by these) and are grounded on *Social Practices* (SP) and *General Codes* (GC) (Middleton 1990:175). The maximum effect of signification, according to Middleton, occurs when music coded on all levels is interpreted with full competence, that is "densely"; the minimum effect is obtained when, for example, a purely GC coding is interpreted on the GC level only, or and Op coding on an Op-specific level only. The essence of this is that popular music relies quite heavily on general codes found in the Western world, or a specific society, while the codes in art music are generally particular to specific works. Consequently, popular music cannot produce any strongly *musical* codes, but has to rely on the listeners' shared cultural background in order to be understood. However, I find this distinction between popular music and art music troublesome. Whereas Middleton suggests a

[31]Despite this claim, it is quite easily conceivable that a very similar typology can be drawn for Western art music, naturally with different instantiations, but keeping the main categories unchanged.

[32]The abbreviations are Stefani's own.

difference in the *level* of coding of popular music contra art music, I would like to suggest that the difference lies rather in the *type* of coding. Therefore, popular music has as many *musical* codes as art music, while art music has as many *general* codes as popular music. This means that popular music does not have a higher (or lower) pertinence than classical music, but it requires a different type - not different level - of competence on the part of the listener, in order to be understood.

According to Stefani there are potentially two types of interpretation on the listener's part, which result from his/her high competence or popular competence respectively. High competence functions through a top-down approach (in the hierarchy) and popular competence functions through a bottom-up approach. Accordingly, high competence is Op-orientated and subscribes to the point of view that music is autonomous. Popular competence supports the idea of heteronomy, or contingency (in Subotnik's vocabulary), as it is mostly inclined to focus on GC and SP levels. Middleton represents this graphically (cf. Figure 2.1) in a way that allows for overlapping in an area between high competence and popular competence. This area is referred to as common competence (Middleton 1990:175). It is obvious here that a low pertinence requires a high competence, while a popular competence is sufficient for deciphering music with a high pertinence. One very contentious issue is the different considerations of popular and classical music, which sees classical music as a reserved, elitist art form, and popular music as a base, populous entertainment form. And certainly the terms "high competence" and "popular competence" invoke "high art" and "popular art", a distinction that has become outdated and redundant.

Yet another approach that has gained tremendous ground during the past twenty years is syntactic analysis, which is a division of linguistics. Noam Chomsky's *Universal Grammar* and *Generative Theory* often serve as models for musicological applications of syntactic analysis. The *Generative Theory* posits that any verbal utterance involves three components - the syntactic, the phonological, and the semantic. Chomsky explains:

> I shall use the term "sentence" to refer to strings of formatives[33] rather than to strings of phones. ... The phonological component of a grammar determines the phonetic form of a sentence generated by the syntactic rules. That is, it relates a structure generated by the syntactic component to a phonetically represented signal. The semantic component determines the semantic interpretation of a sentence. That is, it relates a structure generated by the syntactic component to a certain semantic representation. Both the phonological and semantic components are therefore purely interpretive. Each utilizes information provided by the syntactic component concerning formatives, their inherent properties, and their interrelations in a given sentence. Consequently, the syntactic component of a grammar must specify, for each sentence, a *deep structure* that determines its semantic interpretation and a *surface structure* that determines its phonetic interpretation. The first of these is interpreted by the semantic component; the second, by the phonological component (Chomsky 1965:16)[34].

Based on Chomsky's *Generative Theory* Richard Middleton states that there are two types of generation, that is, there are two generative trees. They are the "tree of elaboration" and the "tree of abstraction" (Middleton 1990:201). The former "distributes the elements of the basic structure around the piece, 'prolongs' them by means of ornamentation and higher-level connectors, and transforms them through variants, substitutes, and so on ... [it] concerns the hierarchy existing among the actual sound-events[35]" (Ibid.). The latter lies behind the tree of elaboration and can be compared with linguistic deep lying structure[36]. Middleton writes:

> We know that, in linguistics, describing the deep structural kernel depends on meaning - but not so much on semantic content as on semantic *form*, that is, the categories which construct grammatical sense ... Similarly in music, if we look for the *form* of the

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[33]A formative is defined as a "minimal syntactically functioning [unit]" (Chomsky 1965:3).

[34]For Chomsky's references to different sets of corresponding terminology, see also Ibid. pp. 198 - 199 (Endnote 12).

[35]Middleton refers to this as the "primary level of signification" (1990:220).

[36]Middleton also notes that Nattiez and others have said that linguistic deep structure is external to the utterance, linking the surface structure to the grammar only by means of abstraction. Furthermore they claim that the musical deep structure is intrinsic to the work performed and can be heard as something piece-specific. However, Middleton argues that in popular music there are many deep structures that are systemic, in other words, they have bearing on whole categories of works. Middleton believes that abstractions *do* occur, if the structures are conceived at a "level of sufficient generality" (Middleton 1990:220).

> signified, we shall find the abstract level of deep structure. One such from [*sic*] will be the tonic/not tonic principle, which has references in general cognition. There are others in the areas of rhythm and melody, as we shall see (Ibid.).

This very cerebral approach seems to deny Cusick's earlier statement about the involvement of the body in the experience of music. It is for this reason that there has been an attempt to prove that a link exists between such a linguistic/cognitive approach and the realisation of the experience in real or imagined corporeal movement. Based on findings by Todd, Iyer writes:

> Recent neuropsychological studies of music perception have affirmed the cognitive role of body motion in music perception and production ... In the sensorimotor perspective, a perceived beat is literally an imagined movement, it seems to involve the same neural facilities as motor activity, most notably motor-sequence planning. Hence, the act of listening to music involves the same mental processes that generate bodily motion (Iyer 1998:electronic format).

To provide sustenance to this notion, Maróthy considers all reality as rhythm in a very broad spectrum (Maróthy & Batári *n.d.*:19). He states that "rhythmic sension snatches [one] out of particularity, switching the individual into the circuit of universality" (Ibid.:32). Iyer has a similar notion about the existence of such a spectrum and gives three behavioural groups and their corresponding frequencies:

- breathing, moderate arm gesture, body sway "phrase" 0.1 - 1.0 Hz
- heartbeat, sucking/chewing, locomotion, intercourse, head-bob "tactus" 1 - 3 Hz
- speech/lingual motion, hand gesture, digital motion "tatum" 3 - 10 Hz (Iyer 1998:electronic format).

Middleton (1990:179) extends this spectrum to the 20 000 Hz boundary of the human auditory range. This means that corporeal movements are at the low frequency end of the spectrum and neural pulsations are at the high frequency end. Research by Middleton, Tagg and others has suggested that these spectral gestures correspond to patterns in music itself. It is thus possible to provide a gestural mapping of a given piece of music, using gestures mentioned earlier in this chapter (cf. Footnote 30).

Analogous to his melodic taxonomy (axial, arch, etc.), Middleton considers rhythm and metre in metrical frameworks. He calls this "durational phonology" (Middleton 1990:211). The basic principle is the stressed/unstressed polarity. Following Narmour (1980:147-153) Middleton explains that rhythmic sequences are denominations of *additive*, *cumulative* and *countercumulative* patterns. In the additive sequences the same duration is repeated, in cumulative sequences shorter durations give way to longer ones, and in the countercumulative sequences the opposite happens. Cumulation is associated with closure and countercumulation with openness (or tension).

In analysis Middleton regards five things as paramount to a thorough understanding of the music. They are:

- The groove (a rhythmic pattern formed by the percussive instruments, bass, guitars and vocals - Middleton associates aspects of the groove with specific bodily movements, like sways of the body, muscular vibration and upper-body jerk)
- Chord sequences (these too are associated with gestures - a flatwards circle of fifths, for instance, is associated with comfort)
- Melodic stock patterns
- Micro-gestures of individual sounds (like vibrato in the voice)
- Texture (aspects of the mixing down of the recorded sound)

In concluding a typical analysis, Middleton normally elaborates on connotations of vocal quality, melodic shape, harmonic treatment, and so forth. What seems evident is that emphasis here is firmly on the moment of *performance* of the musical work. The structural aspects are investigated in terms of how the process of articulation brings them into material being. This is the most valuable aspect of gestural analysis, and one that has been neglected (or even ignored) by traditional (Schenkerian, syntactic, emic, etc.) analyses, with grave consequence.

Another approach, that uses the theory of Image Schemata, emerged directly from

cognitive semantics. This theory was formulated by Mark Johnson and George Lakoff and involved many publications on the subject during the 1980s and 1990s, the most prominent of which are *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and *The Body In The Mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination and reason* (Johnson 1987). The use of image schemata was introduced to musicology, and more specifically music analysis, during the 1990s, with McClary (1992), Hatten (1994), Saslaw (1996) and Echard (1999) among others writing about the possibilities of the use of embodied schematic theory and analysis. In autumn of 1996 the Society for Music Theory held a session on Johnson's work.

The most prominent tenet of Johnson's theory is that the body and mind are inseparable. Experience is therefore both spiritual and corporeal, although it is suggested that all experience is governed by physical processes and concepts. Based on the physical equivalents, mental concepts such as "running out of ideas", "bumping into moral constraints", "entering a new stage is one's life", "building up confidence", and so on, are formed. The two central concepts are image schemata and cross-domain mapping[37], which is actually just an expansion of the magazine of existing schemata. An image schema is a "recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs, that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (Johnson 1987:xiv). Johnson also writes:

> [I]n order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions. *A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities.* These patterns emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions (Ibid.:29).

The key to understanding schemata is abstraction. These schemata exist as abstract *Gestalt* patterns and are not representations of *specific* things. One may understand this better with the help of an analogy. The concept "triangle" can only exist in our

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[37]This is also referred to as Metaphorical Projection. It involves the forming of new schemata as variations of existing ones.

minds as an abstract, encompassing concept. As soon as it is materialised (for instance drawn on paper), it becomes *a triangle* with finite dimensions and angles. Therefore, image schemata operate on such a higher level as to accommodate all reifications of a concept. Johnson states pertinently that image schemata "are not rich, concrete images or mental pictures" (Johnson 1987:xiv); and later, "[they] are flexible in that they can take on any number of specific instantiations in varying contexts" (Ibid.:30). Therefore, Johnson's use of the word "body" should be understood as a generic term. He thus implies a sense of "shared bodily experience" that "allows the cognitive realms of different people to be substantially similar" (Echard 1999:135).

The schemata most frequently applied in music analysis are the container schema, force schema, and source-path-goal schema. The container schema has to do with boundaries and movement within and beyond them. Instances in spoken language are "coming out of a coma", "pouring out one's emotions" and so forth. In music, the container schema comes in handy when explaining cadences, phraseology and modulation, as Saslaw explains:

> As a "close"[38], a cadence shuts or closes a container. In this sense, a cadence forms the boundary that separates one passage from another. Events occurring before the cadence are "in" the container, and events after it are "outside" (Saslaw 1996:222).

Saslaw continues, also explaining the force schema:

> Riemann's characterization of modulation as forcing us away from the tonic key, invokes a force schema. He implies the existence of a force that prevents the escape of the contents of the container, that is, the tones in the key, a force that modulation somehow counteracts and overcomes with its own force, allowing the contents out and into the container of another key (Ibid.:229).

The source-path-goal schema is often used to describe harmonic ventures, cadential progressions and modulations. Its structural elements according to Saslaw are "(1) a

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[38]Saslaw writes this with reference to the German term for cadence, *Schluß*, which means "both 'close' and 'end'" (Saslaw 1996:222).

source or starting point, (2) a destination or end point (or goal), (3) a path or sequence of contiguous locations connecting the source and destination, and (4) a direction towards the destination" (Ibid.:220). The near-far schema may also be used to explain the relations of various tonalities to the tonal centre. Apart from the schemata mentioned thus far, a few others include balance, up-down, centre-periphery, link, part-whole and front-back. Saslaw uses two-dimensional images to portray these (cf. Figure 2.2). In spite of the clarity of these depictions, not enough is said about *what* the sources are and *how* they can overcome the counterforce of containment, for instance. Unfortunately, music analysis based on this embodiment principle may claim objectivity largely only by compromising specificity.

1.3 Gender and sexuality

Although the issues of gender and sexuality normally resort under sociology and cultural studies, the enthusiastic study of popular music from these perspectives by various prominent scholars warrants special mention of them. Studies that fall under these categories normally take one of three stances. The first of these, the feminist stance, tends to look at music history in the light of the role ascribed to women by men. Feminist scholars usually try to eradicate the under- or misrepresentation of women in music history, through a series of re-interpretations of musical works, or by finding archival information about female composers and performers who were relegated and written out of history by men. A noteworthy publication in this category is undoubtedly Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* of 1991. The application of feminist theory to popular music study tends to show how contemporary female artists challenge the patriarchal popular music industry[39]. The second stance is what has come to be known as gay and lesbian musicology. This normally involves homophilic readings of musical texts (like libretti, for instance), or ones that question the (homo-) sexuality of composers and performers like Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Freddie Mercury, George Michael and so forth. The third of these stances investigates musicians' and listeners' involvement in music as expression of their sexuality.

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[39]See for instance Chapter 7 in McClary (1991:148-166), as well as O'Brien in Sabin (1999:186-198).

Examples of this kind of study are M. Clawson's "Masculinity and Skill Acquisition in the Adolescent Rock Band" (1999:99-112), Ruth Padel's *I'm A Man: Sex, Gods And Rock 'n' Roll* (2000) and various contributions to *Musicology And Difference: Gender And Sexuality In Music Scholarship*, edited by Ruth Solie, notably Elizabeth Wood's "Lesbian Fugue: Ethel Smyth's Contrapuntal Arts" (Wood 2000:164-183) and Mitchell Morris's "Reading As An Opera Queen" (2000:184-200).

Sadly, it must be remarked that gender-based musicological studies are all too often occupied *only* with people or personas, as opposed to the music itself. However, the invaluable contribution of this field of thought is the introduction of the idea that there *is* sexual meaning prevalent in music. There must be a reason, for instance, why Bono of the group U2 distinguishes between punk rock and ABBA on the grounds that ABBA represented "girls' music" and punk rock "boys' music" in the 1970s (Bono 1999, own transcription[40]). It is up to the analyst to find the place where this meaning is held, in order for it to be fully understood.

In closing, it must also be observed that too large a majority of approaches that originate in extra-musical disciplines do not consider the music primarily[41], but are partial to the analysis of lyrics, music video, fashion, or questions such as why people like Maria Callas, Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand or Kylie Minogue are considered to be gay icons. Semiotic analyses are often either too vague or, at the other extreme too atomistic in their consideration of the music, so as to miss the total musical significance.

2. APPROACHES THAT ORIGINATE IN MUSICOLOGY

It is generally accepted that the most profound difference between traditional musicology and the approaches discussed above is that musicology studies music as

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[40]This transcription is from an interview in Cramer and Hunt's documentary *The Winner Takes It All: The ABBA Story* of 1999 (full citation under References).

[41]Even Susan McClary is guilty of this. She writes, "What most reactions to Madonna share, however, is an automatic dismissal of her music as irrelevant" (1991:148) and then states, "This essay will concentrate on Madonna, the musician" (Ibid.). However, her good intentions notwithstanding, McClary's descriptions of the links between the visual imagery in Madonna's videos and the music are rather sketchy, at best.

a work in its own right, while extrinsic approaches study music as a sociocultural phenomenon. The result of this is that musical analysts and socio-musicologists have worked in isolation from each other, without any consultation or collaboration worth mentioning. What stems from this is that their various approaches too have been segregated to the extent of being mutually exclusive poles. Instead of seeing musical text and its social context as a continuum, academic study has been taken to the point where it can address only one of these at any given time. John Covach states, for instance:

> The different ways in which musicologists and sociologists approach music generally is often cast as a distinction between text and context: according to this formulation, the musicologist is primarily concerned with musical texts, while the sociologist is concerned principally with social, economic, and political contexts. While this distinction undoubtedly oversimplifies matters, it does capture a basic problem that exists between the fields of musicology and popular-music studies: musicologists tend to ignore popular-music scholarship (after all, it *is* more concerned with sociological issues); and popular-music scholars are only too glad that they do (after all, *their* methods of approaching music, mired as they are in the art-music tradition, can never really get at what is most important about popular music anyway) (Covach 1999:455).

Apart from the division made between "extra-musical" and "musicological" approaches to popular music studies, it is also interesting to note that Covach distinguishes further between musicology and popular music study - not only in the above citation, but also later:

> Recently there has been some movement toward the centre and away from these established disciplinary poles on the part of both musicologists and popular-music scholars. Susan McClary and Robert Walser, for example, have called on musicology to devote greater attention to rock music, and both Richard Middleton and John Shepherd have proposed grounds upon which musicology and popular-music studies could potentially come together (Ibid.).

Although I do not necessarily agree with these notions put forward by Covach (I would like to see popular music scholarship as a natural division of musicology, as I would like to see socio-musicology as a discipline that contributes to the general scientific field of

musicology), he does demonstrate the difficulty experienced, based on differences in approach to the study of different musics. Lori Burns supports the idea that there exists within musicology difficulty in reconciling the study of classical and popular music. Although her definition of musicology is decidedly American, she posits:

> In the fields of musicology and music theory there is little agreement on our analytic methodologies for rock music. Theoretical approaches range from basic letter-name chord labels to detailed Schenkerian analysis. Regardless of the chosen approach, every analyst ought to be aware of the difficulties of analyzing popular music using the theoretical systems devised for common-practice tonal music. The potential exists in any theoretical system for bias, false judgement, or the ascription of privilege, but when the system was admittedly intended for a different application, the interpretive problems abound (Burns 2000:213).

In his introductory chapter to *Reading Pop* Richard Middleton investigates tendencies in popular music studies, and concludes in even more detail than Burns:

> The dominant tendencies here - from the subcultural theory of the Birmingham School in the 1970s to the rush of Madonna exegesis in the late 1980s to the discussions of 'dance music' in the 1990s - have gravitated towards forms of 'consumptionism', which want to locate the textual moment, the moment of meaning production, overwhelmingly in acts of use, connected as a rule with the supposed resistances embodied in listeners' constructions of collective self-definition. The specificities of the sounds shrink (sometimes in embarrassment). It is within this field - marked, always, by a problematizing of the textual - that textually oriented work on popular music has gone on, gradually accruing a range of working methods and constitutive dialogue over theory, but with no dominant organizing paradigm. What exactly is wrong with the old-style musicological pop-text? There have been many critiques. Usually the problems are seen as lying in the following areas:
>
> I. There is a tendency to use inappropriate or loaded terminology. Terms like 'pandiatonic clusters' applied to pop songs really do tend to position them alongside Stravinsky, even though it is not at all clear that anything comparable is going on there, while similarly a phrase such as 'the primitively repetitive tune', for example, is weighed down with evaluative baggage.
> II. There is a skewed focus. Traditionally, musicology is good with pitch structures and harmony, much less good with rhythm, poor with timbre, and this hierarchy

is arguably not congruent with that obtaining in most pop music.

III. 'Notational centricity' (as Philip Tagg calls it) tends to equate the music with a score. This leads to an overemphasis on features that can be notated easily (such as fixed pitches) at the expense of others which cannot (complex rhythmic detail, pitch nuance, sound qualities).

IV. The most common aesthetic is one of abstractionism. Musical meaning is equated with an idealized image of the 'work', contextualized process turned into abstract product. This procedure is at its most extreme in formalist modes of analysis, which tend to reduce the meaning to effects of structure, ignoring emotional and corporeal aspects.

V. Listening is monologic. What the analyst hears is assumed to correlate with 'the music', and the possibility of variable aural readings is ignored.

In addressing these issues, the best 'new musicology' of pop has grasped the need to hear harmony in new ways, to develop new models for rhythmic analysis, to pay attention to nuances of timbre and pitch inflection, to grasp textures and forms in ways that relate to generic and social function, to escape from 'notational centricity' (Middleton 2000:3 - 4).

It is obvious that Middleton is of the persuasion that traditional analytical models that are applicable to classical music cannot be applied with the same degree of success and accuracy to popular music. In his *Studying Popular Music* of 1990, Middleton dedicates an entire chapter (Chapter 4, "'Change gonna come?' Popular Music and Musicology") to showing how traditional musicology cannot provide useful criteria to popular music study (Middleton 1990:103 -126). He later describes at length how Schenkerian analysis fails, by demonstrating the shortcomings of the Schenkerian system in analyses of songs by Gershwin and the Beatles, among others (Ibid.:192-114). Allan Moore has done the same (although he has not quite gone to the same lengths as Middleton) in order to show the inappropriateness of Schenkerian, and other analytical systems (for instance in Moore 1993:11 and Moore 1995:185-187).

2.1 Linear analysis, including Schenker

Middleton and Moore's observations notwithstanding, there is still support for the traditional (including Schenkerian) analysis of popular music as text. Wilfred Mellers's analysis of songs by the Beatles (Mellers 1973) is one example of the strict application

of Schenkerian principles. For Mellers there was no need to analyse classical and popular music differently. Another staunch Schenkerian disciple, Walter Everett, states:

> A related charge[42] has it that by focusing on elements of music that are seldom appreciated by the rock-performer and rock-audience masses - those elements residing in the technical ways tones relate to one another, particularly along the pitch continuum - I am ignoring what is important to most of those listeners - the social value inherent in the music's reception. But I believe that purely musical effects - *nearly always connected in some way to matters of pitch relationships* [my emphasis] - contribute to any composer's or listener's appreciation, regardless of training or superficial awareness (Everett 2000:269 - 270).

According to Moore, Schenkerian analysis is in danger of "[treating] popular music without reference to its cultural and social contexts" (Moore 1995:187) as Hauenstein did in his Schenkerian treatment of songs by ABBA (Hauenstein 1993). Although Moore's point is valid, he seems to miss the fact that the meaning of popular music is as much present *in the music* as is the meaning of art music. A purely Schenkerian analysis would miss even this meaning *and* would be completely oblivious to the embedded social meaning. In addition to the traditional Schenkerian system, there has also been a tendency towards linear analysis, based on the Schenkerian system, but with certain adaptations of that system. A good example is Lori Burns's expansion of the tonal realm to include the modal realm, but within the paradigms of Schenkerian analysis (Burns 2000:213 - 246).

2.2 Contextualised textual analysis

There has, however, also been a tendency towards the contextualisation of the pop song as text, as opposed to regarding the text as closed, out of context. This varies in intensity, from mild suggestion, to analyses where the musical expression of context is central. An example of the former is Stan Hawkins's "Prince: harmonic analysis of 'Anna Stesia'" (1992:325 - 335), where musical expression of the lyrics is inferred in a

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[42]In reply to criticism, Everett wrote this chapter as a retort to "charges" made against him by "reviewers and other pop/rock-scholar peers" (Everett 2000:269).

rather short section of the article. An excellent case in point of the latter is Nicky Losseff's analysis of Kate Bush's "Wuthering Heights" (Losseff 1999:227 - 240), wherein she demonstrates the relation between tonality, lyric content and the intertextual implications of Cathy's homecoming in the original Brontë novel. Other examples of analyses that scrutinise the lyric/music relation are Taylor's analysis of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode", Fiori's analysis of Peter Gabriel's "I Have The Touch", Griffiths's analysis of Bruce Springsteen's "The River" and Bradby & Torode's analysis of Buddy Holly's "Peggy Sue", all of which had been published in various volumes of *Popular Music* and are included in Part 2 "Words And Music" of *Reading Pop.* The contextualisation of musical texts, with relation to lyric content, has also been taken further by Dave Laing's comparison of the subjects of lyrics of mainstream pop, and punk songs of 1976. However, although this statistical approach once again denigrates the *musical* significance of the songs, it can prove helpful in providing some clues as to where the musical significance is situated[43].

2.3 Performance analysis

By the same philosophic fundamentals as gestural analysis (discussed under 1.2 of this chapter) a number of analyses have focused on the performance as a realisation (rather than *the* realisation) of a work. In analyses like these aspects such as timbre, the expressivity of the voice, volume and spatial arrangement[44] come under scrutiny. Dave Laing's chapter "Listening"[45], chapter 3 in his *One Chord Wonders* is one such example. In his analysis he considers the expressivity of the voice and its accent in a specific rendition by Johnny Rotten of "God Save The Queen". An important theoretical component of this analysis is Roland Barthes's notion of "the grain of the voice" (Laing 1985:54-56, after Barthes 1972/1977:179 - 189). The grain of the voice is explained by Barthes as "when [the voice] is in a dual posture, a dual production - of language and

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[43]This can be compared with the doctrine of affections, where the literary text of the music is often complemented by certain rhetorical figures, used as "word paintings" or *hypotyposis*.

[44]See, for instance "The Spatial Organisation of the Indie Music Gig" by Fonarow, 1995.

[45]This was also published as "Listening to Punk" in *The Subcultures Reader*, edited by Gelder & Thornton, 1997.

of music" (Barthes 1972/1977:181). According to Barthes there exist two possible readings of a vocal performance - the *pheno-song* and the *geno-song*. Barthes explains:

> The *pheno-song* ... covers all the phenomena, all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural values (the matter of acknowledged tastes, of fashions, of critical commentaries), which takes its bearing directly on the ideological alibis of a period ('subjectivity', 'expressivity', 'dramaticism', 'personality' of the artist). The *geno-song* is the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality'; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language - not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers, of its letters - where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work. It is, in a very simple word but which must be taken seriously, the *diction* of the language (Barthes 1972/1977:181 - 182).

Another interesting possibility of the geno-song is found where one vocal utterance may invoke multiple meanings. This is called "double-voiced discourse" by Kevin Korsyn (1999:62), or "double-voiced utterance" by David Brackett (1992:309). Brackett remarks thus upon the performativity of Black English, as opposed to Standard English:

> Some of the differences may be summarised as follows: emphasis on the *sound* of words (BE) rather than their meaning (SE); speech as a performance or a game (BE) rather than an act of information giving (SE); patterns of expression without clear distinctions between performer and audience (BE) as against patterns of expression with clear distinction between performer and audience (SE); conversations which are consciously stylised (BE) as against conversations which are unplanned, spontaneous (SE); performance as a process (BE) rather than performance as a thing (SE) (Brackett 1992:310 - 311).

An interesting confluence of the above approaches to performance analysis can be found in Mike Daley's article "Patti Smith's 'Gloria': intertextual play in a rock vocal

performance" (1998:235 - 253). Daley explains the extent of his article in the following way:

> In this article I hope to take on some questions of meaning in a rock vocal performance, examining Patti Smith's reworked version of Van Morrison's garage band standard 'Gloria'. By looking particularly at Smith's textual accretions and timbral manipulation, I will demonstrate some of the ways that her performance can be thought of as an intertextual, critical recasting of Morrison's tale of male sexual conquest. Smith's 'Gloria' differs from Morrison's not only in its altered lyric text, but also in a number of musical details which include harmonic structure, melodic range and form. In this article, though, I devote the most attention to Smith's timbral manipulation, especially the ways that she alters her pronunciation of words for expressive ends. In order to examine this in detail, I have developed a system of notation that tracks Smith's sung vowel sounds alongside her use of pitch. Some of the sonic details so revealed will be used to construct a meta-narrative of Smith's 'Gloria' performance (Daley 1998:235).

The analysis takes the same stance as Barthes's "grain of the voice", but Daley uses Middleton's terminology. In Middleton's words, the vocal performance is analysed in terms of "linguistic" and "para-linguistic" details of performance (Daley 1998:235, after Middleton 1990:178). Para-linguistic details are features that are "not strictly necessary to communication of the basic message" (Middleton 1990:178). This can be understood to be largely congruent with Barthes's geno-song, while the linguistic features resemble Barthes's pheno-song. The intertextual aspect of the performance invokes the concept of the double-voiced discourse. Smith's "textual accretions" can accommodate a double interpretation, namely a reading of her own performance, and a reading of Morrison's.

Although emphasis seems to be primarily on vocal performance, comparable approaches can be taken to instrumental performance too, as demonstrated, for instance, by Robert Walser. His article "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity" (Walser 1993) considers Yngwie Malmsteen's guitar performance practices. Although the communicative possibility of instrumental performance is more limited than that of vocal performance, it is not inconceivable to analyse it in the light of

expressivity or intertextuality[46].

2.4 Multiparameter analysis

While many analyses seem prone to concentrating largely on one or two musical aspects (probably due to the fact that many of these analyses have the dimensional limitations of journal articles, or single chapters) there have also been attempts to analyse popular music in a more holistic way, taking into account as many of its aspects as possible. One such example is Philip Tagg's 1979 monograph *Kojak - 50 Seconds of Television Music*, which is a rather hefty and exhaustive analysis of a very short piece of music. The approach taken is explained by Tagg himself in a contributory chapter in *Reading Pop*. Tagg states the most important parts of his analytical model to be:

> (1) a checklist of parameters of musical expression, (2) the establishment of musemes (minimal units of expression) and museme compounds by means of interobjective comparison, (3) the establishment of figure/ground (melody/accompaniment) relationships, (4) the transformational analysis of melodic phrases, (5) the establishment of patterns of musical process and their congruence with eventual patterns of extramusical process, and (6) the falsification of conclusions by means of hypothetical substitution (Tagg 2000:79 - 80).

He uses a scheme (cf. Figure 2.3) to illustrate the analytical steps taken, from the preamble (deciding which material one wishes to analyse), to the actual analysis (what he calls the "Hermeneutic-Semiological Method"), to the contextualisation of the text (what he calls the "Ideological Method"). According to Tagg, the bold lines in the centre of the diagram represent the music analytical process and the path it follows. The thinner lines down the sides join the extramusical aspects that "feed into the process of production of the music and, at the level of ideology, must also be taken into account by the analyst" (Ibid.:80).

The Hermeneutic-Semiological Method entails the *Hypothetical Substitution* of *Items*

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[46]Malmsteen claims his greatest musical influences to be J.S. Bach, Paganini, Vivaldi, Beethoven, Jimi Hendrix and Ritchie Blackmore, while his appropriation of virtuosity invokes their musical styles (Walser 1993:459).

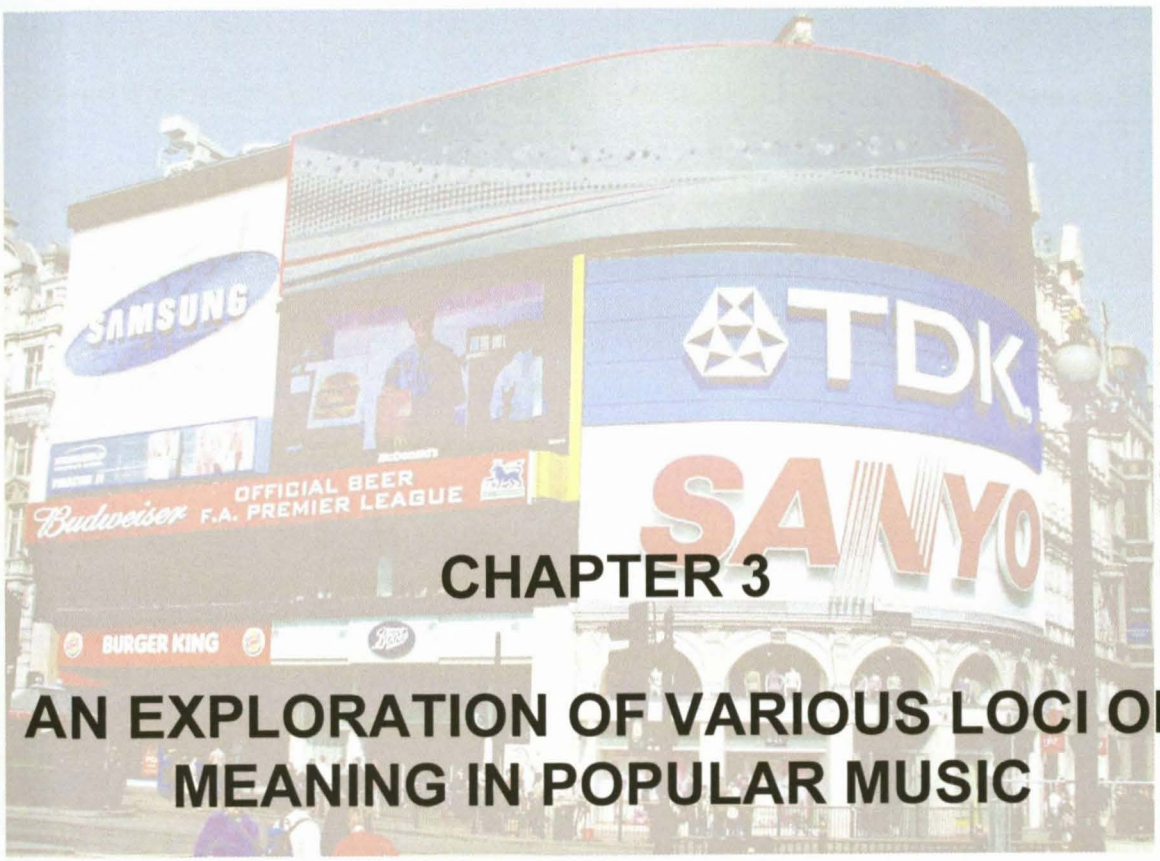
of Musical Code, *Extramusical Fields of Association*, *Patterns of Musical Process* and *Patterns of Extramusical Process* associated with the work studied - the *Analysis Object*, and the same things associated with a larger body of music - the *Interobjective Comparison Material* (Tagg 2000:80 - 81). The interobjective comparison material serves as a magazine of musical examples to which the analysis object can be compared. As an example of this Tagg states that about 350 pieces can be used thus in the case of the *Kojak* title music, and 130 in the case of ABBA's "Fernando" (Ibid.:83). Although the comparison of the Analysis Object and Interobjective Comparison Material is helpful in identifying the minimal expressive units, this approach unfortunately gravitates towards aspects of music that can be notated. In my analysis I also scrutinise aspects of performance that cannot be notated and therefore cannot be considered as musical figures, rhythmic or harmonic patterns. I therefore prefer not to merely compare the Analysis Object with other actual instances of music, but to allude to standard practices and features of the rock idiom, within the Western musical *langue* instead.

It is imperative to look at the music at the moment of production in order to be able to observe all its signifiers. These signifiers can be divided into various categories of expression, or as Tagg calls them "paramters of musical expression". Tagg's first methodological apparatus in the Hermeneutic-Semiological Method is consideration of an Analysis Object against his checklist of parameters. For clarity I shall reproduce the checklist here:

1. *Aspects of time*: duration of AO and relation of this to any other simultaneous forms of communication; duration of sections within the AO; pulse, tempo, metre, periodicity; rhythmic texture and motifs.
2. *Melodic aspects*: register, pitch range; rhythmic motifs; tonal vocabulary; contour; timbre.
3. *Orchestrational aspects*: type and number of voices, instruments, parts; technical aspects of performance; timbre; phrasing; accentuation.
4. *Aspects of tonality and texture*: tonal centre and type of tonality (if any); harmonic idiom; harmonic rhythm; type of harmonic change; chordal alteration; relationships between voices, parts, instruments; compositional texture and method.
5. *Dynamic aspects*: levels of sound strength; accentuation; audibility of parts.

6. *Acoustical aspects*: characteristics of (re-)performance 'venue'; degree of reverberation; distance between sound source and listener; simultaneous 'extraneous' sound.
7. *Electromusical and mechanical aspects*: panning, filtering, compressing, phasing, distortion, delay, mixing, etc.; muting, pizzicato, tongue flutter, etc. (see 3, above) (Tagg 2000:82).

Although not necessarily one hundred per cent complete, this list provides one with an indication of the quantifiable musical parameters that could be studied and analysed. Subsequently, these parameters could provide the key to finding the loci of meaning mentioned earlier in this chapter. In the next chapter I shall use this list and elaborate on it as one point of departure for the analysis of aspects of music and musical performance. Chapter 3 is a discussion of most of these so-called parameters, as well as certain others that I have added. I shall identify various loci of musical meaning according to the extended list. It will become apparent that the meaning can be lodged in both structural and performative aspects of the music (which is why it was necessary to append Tagg's checklist) and that it is very helpful to view music not only as a text-context continuum, as Tagg's diagram suggests, but also as a structure-performance continuum. Chapter 4 will be used to demonstrate the application of the multiparamater model of analysis.



Piccadilly Circus, London
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CHAPTER 3

AN EXPLORATION OF VARIOUS LOCI OF MEANING IN POPULAR MUSIC

3

INTRODUCTION

Man's unique ability to make music and hear it *as music* has also provided him with the desire to know its meaning. Without having to delve into theories about the origin/s of music, and its perceived initial communicative purpose, it is quite plain that music has meaning to humans because we ascribe certain meanings to musically organised[47] tones. It can therefore be derived that meaning in music says as much about us as about the music itself. Our experience of music and its meaning involves processes such as reception, perception, interpretation, memory recall and prediction. We experience music as meaningful because of our ability to recognise patterns of concord and discord, consonance and dissonance, duration, and so on. This pattern recognition is in turn the result of our faculty to retain records of previously occurring sonic phenomena, in that we keep a mental registry or bank collated from prior musical

[47]My use of "musically" here is deliberate, simply because tones can also be ordered in a non-musical manner, for instance in birdsong or a police siren.

experiences.

Much can be said for the fact that music is inextricably time-bound, whether this be real time, or perceived or imagined time. For a piece of music to exist, or have existed, it has to unfold or have unfolded in time. In the case of performances, real, chronological time (what Simon Frith refers to as "outer time" [1996/8:146]) is essential. Before and after the performance, the music exists only in the mind, either as a memory, or as an anticipatory or predictive construct, in "inner time" (Ibid.:145). Music experienced in inner time may reflect its unfolding in outer time, as when a song is re-performed in the head, but it may also not. It is therefore possible to have a recollection of a work of music that does not echo its actual unfolding, but may be likened more to an impression or an idea, rather than to a re-performance[48]. It is clear that we experience music in inner *and* outer time. It is also apparent that our outer time experiences of music cannot be isolated from our inner time experiences, and vice versa. Therefore, it would be impossible for someone who has been deaf since birth to conceptualise music in any form other than feeling the physical vibrations or seeing visual representations of soundscapes. The auditory path is therefore vital to the internalisation of music, when music becomes meaningful to the listener.

Of course the above statement is not designed to challenge the notion that music has inherent meaning. Instead, it merely suggests that this meaning becomes apparent when music is heard - during the processes of internalisation and subsequent reflection. We may recognise the embodied meaning through reception of the music, but we only acknowledge this meaning through the impression that it makes on us, or the engendered feeling it invokes in us[49]. Ultimately, music means *something* to *someone*.

A further point is that we retain - or remember - music, not only as individuals, but also

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[48]This notion may be thought of in the same way as dreams, where the narrative may span any period of time, even though the actual activity of dreaming may be over within seconds.

[49]For a slightly different take on "embodied meaning" and "engendered feeling", see Frith 1996/8:138.

collectively. Therefore, all of Western society, for example, has a collective bank of musical memory. This is nothing other than the Western musical idiom, its styles, or what subdivisions there may exist (refer once again to Richard Middleton's classification on pp. 52 - 53 of this thesis). It follows then that musicologists, who have a deeper-lying knowledge of the musical idiom, can tap into the collective memory more efficiently in order to enhance their personal understanding of music. This is what is presented through analysis. To determine the meaning of a given musical example is often to determine its location in relation to the entire musical tradition (or idiom). Part of musical analysis is thus a comparison of a composition with other works, or a description of its properties against the backdrop of musical conventions. This relationship is often expressed in terms of the structure of musical compositions, as exemplified in such things as tonality, melody, harmony, rhythm and tone colour. Although musical meaning may be seen as a *Gestalt*, analysis dissects this impression into component parts that are located in various realms. Therefore, before the question pertaining to *what* the meaning of music is can be answered satisfactorily, the question of *where* needs to be addressed first. In other words, the realms in which the meaning of music is located have to be identified. In what follows below, this will be looked at in terms of the two major solidifications of popular music, namely structure and transmission.

1. STRUCTURE

The use of the term *structure* here will be in the broadest sense, so as to include the time and pitch relations between the tones of formally composed songs, improvisations, as well as songs that are not "written down". I shall not endeavour to give explanations of concepts such as tonality, harmony, melody, rhythm, and so on, but will give examples of popular music's appropriations and applications of these structural components instead.

1.1 Tonality

Although much of twentieth-century art music involved attempts to do away with tonality,

the development of popular music during this era seems completely unaware of this fact. It can be safely assumed that the majority of Western popular music displays some level of tonal sensibility.

A rather limiting result of the way in which tonality has been studied is the accepted fact that any note in the major or minor scale can be harmonised by either the tonic, dominant or subdominant triad. It is a common conception that much popular music is written within the rules of functional tonality in its most basic form, namely the actual I, IV and V chords. Although this is not the case in all forms of popular music, the vast majority of music written in the 12 bar blues configuration (thus including most 1950s rock-'n-roll) did use only the tonic, subdominant and dominant chords to accompany their melodic line.

The initial drive in triadic succession, namely voice-leading, appears to have been relegated to a mere aspect of what is considered good harmonic progression. In the case of much popular music, especially rock and pop, voice-leading has been completely subverted by chordal accompaniment, notably on the electric guitar. Scruton writes:

> Melodies accompanied by block chords (strummed, for example, on a guitar) have only one half of tonality, and are far indeed from the sense of a tonal space which is present in almost all works in the classical tradition. ... These chords are not voices, and have nothing to add to the vocal line: instead they cancel its native melody, while imprisoning the movement in blocks of synthetic sound (1997:253 - 254).

Much popular music of the twentieth century is therefore not known for its technical ability to exercise good counterpoint. Furthermore, the rules of good voice-leading, as practised by composers in the classical tradition, do not naturally apply to popular music (a leading note in a block chord will not necessarily resolve in a stepwise, ascending movement), and "wrong" doubling of thirds or dissonant notes are common. The concept of voice-leading in multiple voices also presupposes a specific kind of musical texture, where there are a considerable number of independent melodic lines (or parts, if one prefers) that form coherent entities in addition to the main melody (that of the

soloist). Once again, this is something that does not necessarily sit comfortably with popular music and analysis in these terms may prove pointless.

1.2 Dimensions of tonal space: harmony and melody

In the previous section it was described how block chordal accompaniment subverts the existence of melodies in the lower voices. The result is the disjointed, rigid harmonic blocks that are associated with so much rock music, and that can often be represented on paper by the mere description of chords, for example C7, G, F, Dm, and so on. These blocks, with their associated relative stasis (i.e. slow harmonic rhythm), often stand in contrast with a much more fluid melodic line. Melody provides a surface of movement, while harmony provides an anchor in the depths below the surface. Melody and harmony should therefore be seen as complementary to each other in that harmony provides a stable support to the more volatile melody.

1.2.1 Harmony

For all its simultaneously occurring notes, harmony is always much more strongly linked to a key than melody. Whereas a given melody can easily be harmonised in more than one key and in more than one way, the harmonic patterns that emerge from tonal music provide crucial information about which key the music is in, because of the hierarchical relationships that exist between chords.

However, the identity of the tonic is not always a simple question and more than one note in a pop song may claim the status of tonic. One device that enables this, and that is quite peculiar to pop music and rare to classical, is the so-called "truck driver's modulation" (Everett 2000:311) whereby consecutive sections of a song are in keys that are unrelated to each other, but which tonicise notes that are typically a semi-tone or tone apart. So, for instance, ABBA's "Money Money Money" begins in the key of A minor but ends in B♭ minor. The transition happens towards the end of the song, when the chorus is heard twice - once in A minor and immediately thereafter a semitone higher, but not returning to the original tonic. The chord b♭ - d♭ - f is *not* a flattened ii

with a perfect fifth in A minor, nor is it a Neapolitan chord with a minor third. It is quite simply i in B♭ minor. To claim either a or b flat as the tonic (and thus key) of the entire song would be to not account for a considerable section of it. However, trying to trace B♭ minor back to A minor (through the circle of fifths, for instance) is a completely futile operation. Unlike a work in sonata form, "Money Money Money"'s similar sounding sections are in different keys not for any structural reason (compare the typical sonata form appearance of the second theme in a related key in the exposition and in the tonic key in the recapitulation), but for aesthetic ones. The abrupt transposition in the ABBA song is there merely because Andersson and Ulvaeus probably thought it would be monotonous to hear the same chorus twice in the same key. Its function to provide variation is therefore both emphatic and climactic: the signature of this song, i.e. its chorus section, is therefore emphasised and used to take the song to an energetic conclusion.

Apart from this type of modulation, there are other devices that complicate the harmony of a work. Roger Scruton gives a rather exhaustive explication of all the ways in which tonality (as we know it) is made "imperfect" (1997:272 - 281). This incorporates harmony, of course, and has a strong influence on the harmonic choices made by the composer. However, *within* traditional tonality there are ways in which generally accepted harmonic activity is complicated or even hindered. It will be useful to look at some of these more closely.

In certain cases harmonic progression may seem merely incidental to the melodic line and that certain chords are just used because they provide a good consonance to the melodic line. Walter Everett writes:

> Tonal identity is often achieved through chord successions that are not based on harmonic relationships, but are instead governed by contrapuntal lines. ... As with classical forebears, much of rock music escapes the threat of staticity by way of linear progressions - the unidirectional stepwise completions of chord intervals - that shape bass lines, inner-voice melodies, and sometimes vocal parts, providing forward impetus. The melodic lines govern their passages, usually expanding a single harmony through passing chords (Everett 2000:317).

Good examples of songs that have a descending linear progression are Procol Harum's "Whiter Shade Of Pale", Glen Madeiros's "Nothing's Gonna Change My Love For You" and Percy Sledge's "When A Man Loves A Woman", all of which follow an 8-7-6-5 bass line, and in the case of "Whiter Shade Of Pale" an entire 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 movement. With "Whiter Shade" a tonic harmony is extended over the bass line 8-7-6-5, followed by a subdominant harmony over 4-3-2-1 and a dominant harmony over 5-4-3-2 and a return to the tonic with 1 in the bass (cf. Example 3.1). It is clear that the bass line in this example has a voice-leading purpose only and that the harmonies interspersed between the straightforward I, IV and V chords do not have any harmonic power in themselves. It is unnecessary to analyse every chord in the sequence independently and the bass notes that do not form part of the I, IV or V chords should be seen as purely contrapuntal passing notes.

Similarly, songs that are built on only one chord or one bass note (for instance Snap's "The Power" or Chic's "Le Freak"), or on a repetitive ostinato pattern (or riff) may not rely on their bass lines to exert any influence over the harmonic progression of the piece. In these cases the bass line once again has value only in terms of counterpoint, and does not contribute to the forming of chords, or other forms of recognisable harmony. In examples such as A-ha's "Move To Memphis" (cf. Example 3.2) the bass line is so consistent[50] that the harmonic developments in the song largely exclude the bass, which is relegated to the background. From the bass and melody shown in Example 3.2 not much can be derived about the harmony, other than that the song appears to be in E Mixolydian. It has to be accepted that the bass makes a contribution in terms of counterpoint to the melody, but does not defend any sort of harmonic progression (and certainly does not show any cadential progressions). Only a study of the melody's relation to the inner voices can disclose information needed for a harmonic analysis.

One last harmonic device of note that is found in popular music (and once again is hardly found in classical) is the power chord. The power chord is enabled only through

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[50]This bass riff is continued throughout the song, apart from two sections of two seconds each where other bass notes sound, and a section where the bass does not play at all.

electrical amplification of the electric guitar, and may therefore be equally an aspect of performance as of composition. However, it has become such a staple of rock harmony that it is worth mentioning here. Since the 1960s, and thanks to its pioneering by Pete Townshend of The Who, the power chord has provided a very powerful way of harmonising the melodic (vocal) line, without taking any of the emotive credit normally associated with harmony. Therefore, the most common power chord is simply the open perfect fifth, played on electric guitar. Walter Everett's description of the power chord captures its full strength:

> Bands began to use these thirdless sonorities as 'power chords', as they conveyed all of a triad's strength of mechanical perfection, often with all the position-finding scale-step identification of full chords, without the volatile, emotive coloring of a mediating third (Everett 2000:330).

Whereas the thirdless power chord is useful in the sense that it is easily identifiable, it has the limitation of always being in the root position, thus making conjunct voice-leading in the bass and one of the other (usually inner) voices difficult. The power chord in rock music is as much a device of sonority as of harmony. As with many of the other issues of harmony discussed above, the choices made when using power chords are very commonly governed by sensory principles and not so commonly by rules of intellect. The resulting consecutive perfect fifths that appear when power chords are used should therefore not be seen as a hindrance to the practice of harmony, but rather as a special version of harmony that is closely associated with popular music. Rock harmony poses unique challenges to the analyst and it must be remembered that analysis of popular music is very likely to reveal aspects of harmony that were not thus named or intended by the composer. One must therefore tread with caution when analysing popular music harmony so as to not over-intellectualise it, but rather to appreciate its unpretentious nature.

1.2.2 Melody

One of the outcomes of the development of twentieth-century popular music is the phenomenon to simplify both melody and harmony, especially during the process where

traditional (or even folk) music gets translated into the major/minor popular repertoire. The overwhelming presence of functional tonality has forced even modal or distinctly non-diatonic melodies into the mould of tonic, dominant and subdominant tonality. It is therefore not uncommon for a pentatonic melody to take on a diatonic character, because of the diatonic harmonisation thereof. Through this practice the pentatonic scale just becomes a selection from the diatonic, or it is seen as a diatonic scale with omissions. It is therefore a feature of most Western popular music of the twentieth century that melodies are tonicised in relation to the supporting harmonic structure.

It has already been shown that the melody often exerts control over the harmony that is used to support it. The opposite may also be true, but this is more rare. Furthermore, the counterpoint that results from harmonic progressions may or may not solidify as recognisable melodies or counter-melodies to that of the soloist. Example 3.3a shows clearly how Björk's vocals in the chorus of "Jóga" (from *Homogenic*) represent the solo melodic line, supported by chords in root position in the lower strings, but challenged by a contrapuntal melody in the violins that demands almost as much attention as the vocal line itself. No memorable melodies are born from the pitch changes in the viola, 'cello and double bass - in fact, the parallel movement in these three voices provide an excellent example of the loss of voice-leading as a result of the use of block chord accompaniment mentioned earlier.

When analysing these two prominent melodies in "Jóga", it would be helpful to consider them in terms of some sort of typology of melody, for instance the one used by Richard Middleton, as discussed earlier in this thesis (cf. Footnote 30 on page 52). It will be apparent that the vocal line is a much more static, terraced chant type melody than the melody played by the violins, which is a more rapid-moving oscillating type. One shortcoming of this kind of typology, is that the melodies are described in terms of contour and almost exclusively in terms of the occurrence of certain tones, with very little regard for the rhythmic aspect. Example 3.3b shows the vocal line of the first verse and chorus of "Jóga". The melody in the verse is very irregular and declamatory (the transcription is a mere approximation), and not chant-like at all. However, as a departure from the norm, in this example the declamatory melody also does not seem

to follow normal rhythmic patterns of speech, but is rather melismatic at times. It is obvious that no one melodic type in Middleton's typology would suffice to describe this melody, as it displays characteristics of a number of types. Clearly the melody would have to be analysed in the segments that it naturally falls into, and not just in terms of which tones occur and in which succession. Melody is a phenomenon that operates not only in the realm of pitch, but also in the domain of time and duration. Extending this thought, music *per se* cannot exist outside of the realm of time and duration and must therefore also be discussed in these terms.

1.3 Temporal and durational considerations

In studies of popular music, and specifically popular music of the "rock and pop" strand, aspects of time and duration are often dealt with quite rigidly. These studies normally fall back on an existing model of analysis - one that presupposes that pop and rock music has a clear-cut approach to and appropriation of rhythm, syncopation and metre. Songs are often seen as being either of the ballad type, or meant for dancing and are frequently described as "slow", "mid-tempo" or "fast". It is readily accepted that the metre is most probably regular simple duple or quadruple, with emphasis on the backbeat (normally enhanced by the snare drum). Strong beats are in most cases marked by the bass drum, while hi-hat cymbals or tambourine fill the off-beats.

Now, although these descriptions can be applied with reasonable accuracy to some 1950s and 1960s Anglo-American rock/rock-'n-roll music, a fairly large body of music lies outside this mould. Good examples would be art rock, progressive rock, rap, hip-hop and so on. Popular music in the European tradition also represents an exception to the "rules" stated above. Flowing from the existence of these exceptions is the arousal of my concern yet again that particularity is forfeited by the rehashing of existing methods and a loose and general application of them to all popular music. Not only is it necessary for there to be a good descriptive system for *all* popular music, but this system must be able to grasp the inherent *meaning* of the use of rhythm, tempo, syncopation, groove and metre.

However, it *can* be derived from the aforementioned formulaic description of rock music that some kind of connotative meaning in the beat is acknowledged. In other words, music that fits the description conjures up images associated with Anglo-American rock-'n-roll of the 1950s and rock of the ensuing decades. As an example, the Swedish group ABBA's earlier work emulated "American" beats (for instance "Ring Ring" [1973], "So Long" [1974/1975], "Watch Out" [1974] and "Waterloo" [1974]) and has an American *feel* to it, while later work (like "The Piper" [1980], "Head Over Heels" [1982/1981], "I Let The Music Speak" [1981], "Two For The Price Of One" [1981] and "Soldiers" [1981])[51] does not feed off an existing stock of Americanisms, but rather from a more theatrical, European tradition (perhaps a foretaste of the creative team of Andersson and Ulvaeus's involvement in musical theatre and film from 1985 onwards). It is clear that ABBA's more mature style was more personal and unique, while their initial offerings bear testimony to a desire to appeal to a more universal (effectively a larger American and British) audience, by means of a cut-and-paste approach to music-making.

1.3.1 The backbeat

What I have chosen to label "American" here could perhaps be more accurately referred to as part of the Afro-American idiom of rock-'n-roll, that was in turn part of the emancipation of American music from the influence of Western European popular music. Timothy Taylor argues that this emancipatory meaning is located within the beat of the music. He writes:

> Akin to this figure[52] and its variations is the backbeat (accented second and fourth beats), another salient feature of Berry's music. And that backbeat (and almost any pop music backbeat) has ideological implications, since it is a deliberate thwarting of western European musical conventions, where 'natural' accents tend to fall on the odd-

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[51]Where two dates are given, the song's appearance on an album and its release as a single occurred in different years. In each case the date of release of the single is given first.

[52]Taylor refers here to what he dubs the "inverse hemiola" (Taylor 2000:173 - 174) - a prominent feature of Chuck Berry's music. According to Taylor this figure provides a musical analogy to the lyrics of the song "Johnny B. Goode" and is an assertion of Otherness (Ibid.).

> numbered beats in duple metre. John Shepherd (1987)[53] writes that the backbeat in popular music is a sign of the marginalized in western European and American culture attempting to win back cultural space which had been previously occupied by the dominant culture (Taylor 2000:174).

He continues:

> I think he is right. An unvarying 4/4 metre, with nearly constant quavers is homologous to the socio-politico-cultural status quo, which in Berry's time was white. His music often subverts this hegemonic norm. The backbeat in 'Johnny B. Goode' constantly upsets the first and third beat accents normally found in 4/4 (Ibid.:174 - 175).

This interpretation certainly seems valid and satisfactory. It is also single-stranded: one possibility and one meaning. However, I am by no means criticising Timothy Taylor (or John Shepherd) or questioning the validity of this opinion. Taylor later acknowledges the existence of multivalent meanings, as he states:

> Because of Berry and other early rock musicians, the backbeat became a feature of the rock and roll style, and as such could be borrowed by other musicians and made to mean other things, if anything. Elvis Presley, for instance, could use the backbeat and instead of signifying African-Americans striving to create their own subculture, it is usually taken to indicate an assertion of male sexuality (Taylor 2000:176).

A good indication of just how open to interpretation the meaning of the rock-'n-roll backbeat is, can be found once again in ABBA's "So Long", where the backbeat works to corroborate the female vocalist's independence from, and snubbing of an affluent suitor. However, I consider it a very strong possibility that this is not ABBA's intended use of the backbeat, but that it was taken to signify a certain sound quality - that of American rock-'n-roll. This can be described as a process of adaptation, appropriation and ideological shifting, in order to aestheticise the musical device and to take it from the realm of the ideological to that of the aesthetic or sound identity. When "So Long" was recorded, the backbeat had been in use for at least one quarter of a century and

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[53]Taylor refers to Shepherd's "Music and Male Hegemony" of 1987 (full citation under References).

had been accepted into the *musical* as well as ideological vocabulary. Just as American rockers or the 1950s used the backbeat to emancipate American music from European trends and influences, ABBA's use of it can be viewed as a personal emancipation, an attempt to free themselves and their music from their own Swedish background. As Benny Andersson had done before by laying down his accordion in exchange for the organ and electric keyboard he used in the Hep Stars[54], ABBA now moved away from their *folkpark*[55] and even *Eurovision* background and embraced the lives of rock and pop stars. The backbeat signifies this in a sonic form, by means of association.

1.3.2 Syncopation

Another temporal device that plays a paramount role in popular music (and once again, most Anglo-American popular music of today) is syncopation. Although syncopation has been around for centuries, it was not made a style-defining feature of any popular music before rag-time. And since rag-time, virtually every stream of Afro-American popular music has utilised syncopation in some form or way as a prominent aspect of its composition and performance: jazz, blues, rock-'n-roll, motown, funk, disco, and so on. Dave Laing writes:

> Perhaps the most characteristic rhythmic feature of music containing Afro-American elements is syncopation. Indeed, one of Bill Haley's accounts of the formation of his own rock 'n roll style presents it as the key factor: "I felt that if I could take, say, a Dixieland tune and drop the first and third beats and accentuate the second and fourth, and add a beat the listeners could clap to as well as dance this would be what they were after"[56]. Syncopated rhythms of this kind accentuate the 'off beat'[57] and in doing so draw

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[54]Before ABBA was formed, Andersson was part of this group (from 1964 to 1969), who were considered as the Beatles of Sweden.

[55]*Folkparks* were open-air venues in Sweden where bands performed during the summer. It was customary for Swedish groups to travel from one city to another, and from one *folkpark* to the next on summer concert tours.

[56]Laing quotes here from C. Gillet's *The Sound Of The City*, p. 30 .

[57]At this point it is necessary to mark the difference between mere syncopation and the emphatic use of the backbeat. The latter is a specific application of syncopation, but does not emphasize divisions of the beat.

> the listener into the music to 'supply' the 'missing' first and third beats either mentally or physically, through hand-clapping, nodding or dancing. The presence of a recognizable syncopation in the music is a precondition for all dancing in the rock-based popular music sphere (Laing 1985:61).

It can therefore be assumed with considerable safety that the use of the backbeat and syncopation provides momentum, or forward drive to pop and rock music, as syncopation clearly engages the body/mind and necessitates "participation" in the music. The listener is further spurred to interact with the music by the desire for the resolution of open-ended rhythmic patterns. In the same way that we anticipate the resolution of dissonant harmonies, we seem to want the subversion of the beat by syncopation to be rectified through the restoration of the regular pulse. Musical phrases or compositions rarely end on subdivisions of the beat, and in pop and rock music there seems to be a compositional consensus that melodies and melodic phrases end on strong beats, or at least anticipations of strong beats (therefore first and third beats or subdivisions of fourth and second beats). Key issues here are the expectation on the part of the listener, and the creation and subsequent release of tension in the music. It is also not difficult to see that the listener's expectation is deeply rooted in the musical idiom and conventions of Western music, that there exists an unwritten rule that whatever time is taken has to be given back. That is, unwritten maybe for the uninformed listener, but in terms of conventional music theory the use of syncopation all comes down to basic mathematics. The theoretical bar has to be "filled up" (i.e. four beats to a 4/4 bar; for every halved beat there has to be a complementary half in the same bar, etc.) and when the theoretical bar line is traversed by a syncopated rhythmic pattern, balance has to be restored mathematically somewhere on the other side of the line.

For the layman listener, however, syncopation constitutes a disturbance in the regularity of the beat that results in the gravitational pull towards a point where the regular beat is restored again. For most listeners, the desired effect is the movement from entropy to equilibrium, whether theoretically and mathematically understood or not. Often passages containing this transition from disorder to order are accompanied by the build-up of tension that gravitates towards eventual relief.

1.3.3 Rhythmic tension

The experience of the tension created by syncopated melodic lines can vary from the unease felt when listening to the opening of Mozart's overture to *Don Giovanni* to the pleasure experienced when dancing to Kylie Minogue's "Can't Get You Out Of My Head" from *Fever*. In both instances there is a strong sense of play between the syncopated and the regular. On one level, there is the juxtaposing of the regular and syncopated in the vertical texture of the music: In *Don Giovanni* (cf. Example 3.4) the violas, celli and double basses provide a consistent accompaniment *on the beat* to the syncopated line in the first violins (bars 11 to 14), while in "Can't Get You Out Of My Head" (cf. Examples 3.5a and 3.5b) the consistently syncopated synthesised bass line is balanced by the regularity of the electronic percussion and Minogue's regular *on the beat* vocalisation "I just can't get you out of my head / Boy your loving is all I think about" (Example 3.5a). On another level, the tension created by the syncopation always finds release in the horizontal balance created, in the case of *Don Giovanni* by the D minor tonic chord on the first beat of bar 15, and in "Can't Get You Out Of My Head" by the play between the "la-la-la"'s *on the beat*, and the syncopated ones (Example 3.5b).

Of course it would be too simplistic to attribute any listener's experience of these two examples solely to the tension/release dipole that results from these alternations of syncopated and regular beats. However, the experience of the syncopation/non-syncopation dipole as described above reminds once again of the complex interaction between the mind and the body, as briefly described in Chapter 2. It is clear that rhythm plays an extremely important part in the listener's perception of music, especially in terms of the physicality of listening.

It can be concluded that meaning is inherent in all aspects of time and duration of popular music: fast songs tend to have an air of urgency and immediacy about them, long tracks can be associated with feelings of grandeur (the song is seen as a *work* rather than a standard single), long vocal notes bear a certain weight associated with emphasis, or tranquillity, simple rhythms signify simplicity and lack of sophistication, tempo inconsistencies normally mean a lack of skill or an inverted aesthetic, and so

forth.

1.4 Lyrics

For the purposes of analysis, the lyrics of song seems to be the most obvious and most accessible aspect of popular music. It is therefore also the aspect most frequently referred to in analyses, especially those by cultural theorists, sociologists and media scholars. The linguistic property of lyrics supposedly guarantees a high level of code bearing. Lyrics bear meaning of the highest possible pertinence - a meaning that is accordingly most easily and clearly understood by the listener. In this sense the lyrics of a song map out its semantic field, its central theme, or its message - what the song (or the singer) wants to say.

Certain key issues arise from the intention to analyse the lyrics of a song. These issues include the identities of the singer and the listener (who is addressing whom?), the message (what is being said?), the language used (in what terms is it being articulated?), the mode of performance (how is it being uttered?), and the semantics of the words (what does it mean?). The question of persona is important for the contextualisation of the song as text. The personae of the singer and the listener are more than merely the result of birth, in that they are often carefully constructed around such issues as culture and subculture, language and dialect, religion, ethnicity and race, socioeconomic stratum, urban or rural background, and so on. The persona of the singer need not necessarily be equated with that of the actual performer, as when, for instance, Madonna sings "I'm not that kind of *guy* [my emphasis], etc." ("Nobody Knows Me" from *American Life*, 2003), or when Chuck Berry deliberately avoids using too many Afro-American idioms in his words and music in order to appeal to a broader, white audience[58]. The narrator can accordingly address different listeners at different stages of one song, or pretend to be addressing only one person, when in fact addressing the

[58]In this regard, see Timothy Taylor's essay on Berry's "Johnny B. Goode", wherein he suggests that Berry sanitised his music from Afro-Americanisms in order to appeal to a white audience with the intent of avoiding "ghettoization" (Taylor 2000:180).

masses[59]. However, here other factors come into play, like recording techniques (for instance the stance of the voice), intention, credibility, authenticity and performative roleplay. Yet, these factors have not always been considered as important in the analysis of lyrics, especially in the earliest attempts - the so-called *content analysis*.

Simon Frith believes the first systematic content analyst of lyrics to be J.G. Peatman, who entertained an Adornian view of the standardisation of popular song (Frith 1988:106). From Peatman's writing[60] Frith concludes that all successful popular songs from Peatman's time dealt with romantic love, and always in one of three ways, resulting in the " 'happy in love' song, the 'frustrated in love' song and the 'novelty song with sex interest'" (Peatman, quoted in Ibid.). In an attempt to broaden the scope of Peatman's view, later American scholars suggested that lyrics reflect the collective mood, deeper lying thought and emotional needs of the American public. It was argued that these things changed with time, so that the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century were marked by patriotism, hedonism and proletarianism, the 1920s to 1940s characterised by negativity and morbidity, the 1950s by postwar optimism and Cold War interest in the preservation of American values, while the 1960s represented a new approach to sexuality and morality. With reference to H.F. Mooney, who championed this periodisation of the American collective attitude, Frith writes:

> Mooney's survey of American cultural history is unsystematic, and he seems to choose songs that support his thesis, rather than vice versa; but his 'reflection theory' of pop lyrics has been shared by most of the more scientific content analysts who followed up his work. American sociologists have used song words, in particular, to chart the rise of a youth culture, with new attitudes to love and sex and fun, and to document the differences between romance in the 1950s and 1960s. In both eras the love drama passed through four acts - search, happiness, break-up, isolation - but 1960s pop stressed hedonism, movement, freedom and choice. Courtship no longer led to marriage (relationships had a natural history, died a natural death); happiness meant sexual happiness; love was no longer an 'elusive quarry', but a passing, to-be-seized opportunity (Frith 1988:107).

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[59]Richard Hoggart calls this "forced intimacy" (Hoggart, quoted in Frith 1988:109).

[60]Peatman wrote an essay, "Radio and Popular Music", for the 1942 - 43 publication *Radio Research*, edited by Lazersfeld and Stanton.

In addition to Frith's critique of Mooney's work as unsystematic and unscientific, my main concern here is that the sweeping statements made regarding whole decades, or even longer periods, remind too much of meta-narrative thought. Not only are casually generalised assumptions made about the collective consciousness during these eras, but it is accepted by default that the attitudes of society are reflected in the lyrics, that the lyrics themselves are rooted in the "mass mood", as Mooney called it (quoted in Frith 1988:106). Furthermore, this view of popular music seems to equate the meaning of lyrics with the public's understanding of them. It also denies the existence of graded levels of importance of lyrics and their semantic or ideological charge, and therefore cannot, by the nature of its shortcomings, account for the penchant for nonsense lyrics in 1950s rock-'n-roll, for instance.

With the British Invasion of the 1960s, postwar urban blues and the genesis of folk and (protest) rock, a sudden distinction was made between pop and rock, on the basis of the poetic value of the lyrics. Whereas pop was seen as prolonging the "happy/unhappy in love" theme, folk and rock were seen as being more poetic and therefore more authentic. Accordingly, the lyrics of pop were regarded as clichéd and formulaic, dealing with an idealised rather than real life; in short, escapist. Rock and folk lyrics, on the other hand, were considered realist, and any allusion to fantasy was seen not as an attempt to escape or deny reality, but as to aestheticise reality, in order to be able to deal with it in a more meaningful way. The urban blues of this era was seen as poetic, not in spite of, but because of its use of everyday language that is, in the case of African Americans, stylised and marked by repetitive patterns. This would imply then that rock, folk and blues lyrics should be analysed as poetry. Blues should be analysed in terms of its use of words in everyday speech patterns (therefore, not the choice of words, but the contextualisation of them), while rock and folk lyrics should be analysed conversely. Frith explains:

> Rock 'poets' are recognised by a particular sort of self-consciousness; their status rests not on their approach to words but on the types of word they use; rock poetry is a matter of planting poetic clues, and the rock singer-songwriters who emerged from folk clubs in the 1960s thus followed Bob Dylan's seminal example, drawing words from classic balladry, from the beat poets, from 150 years of Bohemian romantic verse. Rock

> 'poetry' opened up possibilities of lyrical banality of which Tin Pan Alley had never even dreamt, but for observing academics it seemed to suggest a new pop seriousness. ... This was to suggest a new criterion of lyrical realism - truth-to-personal-experience or truth-to-feeling, a truth measured by the private use of words, the self-conscious use of language (Frith 1988:117 - 118).

Although the views expressed by Frith are interesting and even enlightening, I find the distinction between pop and the rock-folk-blues group rather artificial and cumbersome: First, because I do not approve of the dismissal of pop music without *a priori* knowledge of it; second, because I believe there to be various degrees of poeticism throughout the whole spectrum of popular - and art - music; and third, because I feel that too much value is ascribed to the poetic quality of lyrics. Furthermore, all the approaches to lyric analysis described by me thus far are based on three erroneous assumptions. They are: (i) the content of lyrics can be equated with message content; (ii) lyrics with standardised themes are meaningless; and (iii) the meaning of popular music lyrics is only valid if they are successfully received and understood by the listener. A more accommodating approach to lyric analysis would be one that acknowledges variance in popular music. It accepts that lyrics may be poetic or ordinary, that they may deal with love or be oblivious to it, that they may or may not reflect cultural values, that they may be central to a song or be rather insignificant, that they may be ideologically charged or not, and so on. Although this may look like an either/or approach, I am merely stating the outer opposing limits. Anything in between these may also apply.

An altogether different approach to lyric analysis is one that presumes that listeners do not listen to lyrics as a message at all. Although this idea is backed by empirical research[61] dating back to the 1960s (mostly by American scholars), Richard Middleton rejects it as insubstantial, positing the message element of lyrics as an intuitive probability (Middleton 2000:163). Even if Middleton's intuition presents him with a probable, even highly likely scenario, two interesting opinions aired by Frith and others warrant at least some mention of them. The first of these is that:

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[61]Simon Frith refers to research by Riesman and Denzin that suggests that listeners ignore lyrics in favour of the beat and the melody - the *sound* - of songs (Frith 1988:119).

> In songs, words are the sign of a voice. A song is always a performance and song words are always spoken out, heard in someone's accent. ... It is not just what they sing, but the way they sing it, that determines what singers mean to us and how we are placed, as an audience, in relationship to them (Frith 1988:120 - 121).

This immediately causes one to allude to Barthes's *grain of the voice* and *pheno song* concepts, or Chomsky's *phonological component*, where the sound formation and organisation attribute meaning in addition to the semantic value of the words used. This theory accommodates the notion that not only poetic or realistic lyrics are meaningful: lyrics created from a magazine of ordinary language words, word combinations and expressions can therefore bear as much meaning as lyrics that are poetically crafted. Accordingly, lyrics with very little or no semantic value can be used to convey emotive or other meaning. In this capacity, words act as a vehicle of expression that has very little to do with their content, but which relies heavily on their form, and particularly their phonological form. This phenomenon is the crux of the second opinion that I want to discuss.

It is conceivable that rock and pop singers could use words just as a means of expression, without the words being the primary expression themselves. As an example of this, Dave Laing writes the following about Buddy Holly's singing[62]:

> Instead of trying to interpret the lyric ... [Holly] uses it as a jumping off point for his own stylistic inclinations. He uses it to play rock 'n' roll music, instead of regarding his role as one of portraying an emotion contained in the lyric (Laing 1971:70).

Although Holly does not use the words to showcase his technical virtuosity, he uses them to another end - to use the voice as an instrument, as a *musical* tool, in addition to being a purely linguistic tool. The vocalist, who is constantly a soloist, uses the verse and refrain as solos, as a guitarist would use a guitar solo, or a drummer a drum solo. This practice ensures that even the nonsense syllables mentioned earlier are useful in providing phonological material for the voice to use, in the same way that for instance

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[62]Laing's view is also supported by Bradby and Torode in their essay on Holly's "Peggy Sue"(Bradby and Torode 2000:205).

Ella Fitzgerald and Cleo Lane's singing styles were richly embellished with vocal scatting, or Luciano Berio's vocal compositions featured words that had been dissected into their phonetic components. Just as Berio's vocal compositions cannot be deemed meaningless, so pop music with "weaker" lyrics are not devoid of meaning. Meaning is still present in the lyrics, but it does not necessarily reside so prominently in semantic paradigms. However, the suggestion is not that there is no differentiation between good lyrics and weaker lyrics. The characteristics of good poetry (and thus lyrics of a high poetic quality) are such that a strong phonological element is always present. Poetry becomes most poignant when the poet uses devices such as rhyme, assonance, alliteration, metre, accent and so forth to enhance the message carried in the mere words. I am also not suggesting (as Frith does[63]) that the phonological component is only prevalent in commercial pop music characterised by clichéd lyrics. The phonological component of lyrics is always present in a performance or recording of vocal music.

A very useful distinction is made by Dave Laing between what he calls the musical *auteur* and the musical *metteur en scène.* He explains the difference thus:

> The musical equivalent of the *metteur en scène* is the performer who regards a song as an actor does his part - as something to be expressed, something to get across. His aim is to render the lyric faithfully. The vocal style of the singer is determined almost entirely by the emotional connotations of the words. The approach of the rock *auteur* however, is determined not by the unique features of the song but by his personal style, the ensemble of vocal effects that characterise the whole body of his work (Laing 1971:58 - 59).

From this can be inferred that the type of singing associated with the *auteur* is the type that makes most use of the words as a vehicle of expression, by means of their sonic properties, while the *metteur* expresses only the words themselves. Although the meaning of the words come to the fore more successfully in the performance by a

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[63]As an equivalent to rock poetry, Frith offers the notion of the phonological meaning as "the poetry of pop", thus suggesting that this aspect surfaces only in the absence of poetic lyrics (Frith 1988:120 - 122). Even if this is not Frith's intention, he unfortunately does not discuss this type of "poetry" in addition to conventional poetry, or even as an aspect thereof (as I believe it is) but as a useful alternative that emerges in its absence.

metteur , as Simon Frith also concludes (Frith 1988:123), the fact remains that *auteurs* still use words that might have a semantic meaning - that a choice between mere sounds and actual words is often made in favour of the latter. This makes it imperative that the lyrics of songs, regardless of the singer's use, or the public's understanding of them, be taken into consideration in any analysis.

In conclusion it can be said that most of the approaches, including the *metteur/auteur* distinction, presuppose a high level of consistency in any pop or rock performance. However, it is my conviction that singers often pendulate between extremes and that pop and rock songs are often rich texts that operate on more than one level of signification, poetic or otherwise, interpretive, imitative, or creative. In addition it can be said that none of the scholarly traditions of analysis mentioned above are completely fallacious or utterly useless - from all of these it is possible to learn something and to glean useful elements of lyric analysis. Lyric analysis will be most revealing when a study is undertaken of the lyrics *in performance*. This is when the poetic and phonological qualities of the lyrics can be seen to complement, or contradict, the semantic meaning exposed in a mere "dry" analysis of the written lyrics as a closed text. Lyrics *can* reflect the mass mood of society, but analysis must not take this as a given or hold this as the goal of the analytical endeavour. As with all analyses, the goal should be to find the meaning, not to show the meaning that the analyst believes there to exist in the music.

2. TRANSMISSION

The invention and subsequent refinement of the microphone in the early part of the twentieth century presented modern-age popular music with three of its most important modes of transmission: amplification, recording and radio broadcasting. The advent of rock-'n-roll in the 1950s would not have been possible without the microphone, the tape recorder and magnetic tape. Hereafter, commercial popular music could certainly not be conceived without it being amplified, recorded, pressed and sold in commodified form. The seven inch and twelve inch single, complete with picture sleeve, became the main dissemination format of popular music until the introduction of compact disc in the early 1980s. The *recorded* sound of popular music artists gradually came to rival the live

performance as the identity-giving artistic output[64]. The artists of the day were being defined by their latest records and the success thereof on the charts, or hit parades, while live performances were increasingly conceived for purposes of the promotion of long play records.

Whereas the initial purpose of recording was the mere documentation of existing sound, as for instance Béla Bartók put recording equipment to use, the *process* of recording itself gradually became a calculated, if not artistic, endeavour. Albin Zak even goes as far as to equate the *making* of a record (that is, the recording, sound engineering and production of what has been written and played) with composition. He states:

> [R]ock songs - unlike, say, those of Tin Pan Alley - enter the culture in the first instance as recordings, which, like scores, are detailed and fixed representations of musical thought. To this extent, rock records already bear signs associated historically with musical works. They are, in Goehr's[65] terms, "complete and discrete, original and fixed, personally owned units". But they also expand the work concept, for as Richard Middleton[66] points out, it is "recordings rather than scores which represent an extreme form of reified abstraction". This is because unlike scripted works, records represent more than musical thought. They also encompass musical utterances and sonic relationships - material - whose particularity is immutable and thus essential to the work's identity. While it is clear that records are musical works and that they are created through a compositional process, the traditional meanings of these terms must be expanded if they are to be understood in this context (Zak 2001:42 - 43).

If this conception of *the work* is accepted and adopted, it means that there are many aspects associated with recording and/or amplification of music that have to be taken into account in any musical analysis. This once again leads back to Tagg's checklist of

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[64]Albin Zak recalls the tale of Elvis Presley's audition to Sam Phllips: "When Sam Phillips wanted to audition Elvis Presley, he did not simply want to hear him sing. He left that to Scottie Moore. It was only after Moore had determined that Presley had 'good timing' and 'a good voice' that Phillips invited Elvis to his studio to 'see what he sound[ed] like coming back off of tape'" (Zak 2001:13).

[65]Zak quotes here from Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum Of Musical Works: An Essay In The Philosophy Of Music* (Goehr 1992:206).

[66]This quotation is from *Studying Popular Music* (Middleton 1990:83).

"parameters of musical expression" (see pp. 69 - 70 of this thesis), where one of the parameters is "electromusical and mechanical aspects" (Tagg 2000:82). This parameter refers almost exclusively to elements of mixing and other studio techniques. In a rather similar approach Zak has also compiled a list, which he describes as "all the sound phenomena found on records" (2001:49). He writes:

> The elements that I've sketched out fall into five broad categories that represent all the sound phenomena found on records: 1) musical performance, 2) timbre, 3) echo, 4) ambience (reverberation), and 5) texture. It is the configuration of relationships among these elements that gives ... [the track] its full meaning and its unique identity. In addition to their phenomenal aspect, these categories include the activities and processes that shape the sounds (Ibid.).

It is quite evident that Zak's points 2 to 5 are, at least in part, subsumed by Tagg's points 6 and 7, while Tagg's points 1 to 5 are included in Zak's point 1, "musical performance". The final, analysable *work* then is a combination of these phenomena and their generative[67] processes - the composing out and/or performance of the composition. Meaning in the analysable work therefore has to lie within the sonic phenomena, the conditions for their creation and the circumstances surrounding the performance. With Middleton and Zak's views of the record as a work resulting from a compositional process, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep categories (sounds, processes, performances, etc.) apart. It becomes intellectually more challenging to separate content from form, and vice versa. Music records are therefore rather peculiar phenomena, in that they are simultaneously composition *and* transmission. However, the transmission is of a very specific kind, as every instance of it is meant as an exact replica of the initial master recording. Whereas the fidelity of playback has bearing on the transmission, it has no influence over the compositional/structural aspect of the work.

In addition, live performances invoke recordings, and in many contemporary examples

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[67]The term "generative" is used here not strictly in Chomsky's sense of the word, but rather as meaning "coming into being". The issue here is the activities involved in, and processes required for the production of sound phenomena.

try to emulate them[68], to the point of making intertextual, or possibly more accurately, *intra*textual references - to themselves. Although the ambience and acoustic properties of the recording studio can never be copied in the live performance, it is the *sound* of the studio version of the music that artists often try to capture and recreate when performing in front of an audience. The Swedish group ABBA can serve as an example of this: in the 1970s and 1980s ABBA used a dramatically augmented corps of musicians and backing vocalists on stage in order to fill out the sonic field of the performance, to enhance the sound and thus to leave no gaps or holes in the sound picture originally created by the studio versions of their songs[69]. In more recent pop concert performances, for instance Kylie Minogue's *Fever* (2002) and *Showgirl* (2005) concert tours and Madonna's *Drowned World* (2001), *Reinvention* (2004) and *Confessions* (2006) tours, the characteristically electronic studio sound is replicated by real-time voice alterations (digital voice effects), electronic percussion sets and even pre-recorded sequences played back. It is therefore not uncommon to have a "live" sound resulting from an eclectic mix of live (real-time) playing (on acoustic instruments and synthesizers), sounds manipulated in real-time, and recorded sounds. This practice champions technical and technological possibilities associated with pop music since the electronic pop of the late 1970s (e.g. Kraftwerk) and the early 1980s (e.g. Depeche Mode, Yazoo, New Order, Erasure, Human League, Blancmange, Bronski Beat, etc.). The result is an artificial, superficial sound with a diminished human element - the voice of a sort of androgynous machine - but with a strong technological identity.

The live performance, like the music video, has in addition to the musical delivery also

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[68]The reverse may also be true: The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was recorded entirely in Abbey Road studio 2, Abbey Road studio 1 and Regent Sound Studio. However, crowd noise was added to the mix of the opening track so as to resemble a live recording.

[69]Inspired by Phil Spector, ABBA's sound engineer, Michael Tretow experimented with various studio techniques in order to create the characteristic ABBA sound. Tretow wanted a "big" sound, like the "wall of sound" Spector was renowned for. The recording of an ABBA song entailed every musician recording his or her part twice. The two versions where then mixed together, with the speed of the second adjusted slightly out of tune. According to Tretow, this resulted in the sound being bigger and richer. Tretow also developed a technique for recording the vocals, where an overdub was made, the pitch of which was adjusted marginally upwards. This produced a thinner, but clearer sound which, when combined with the original vocal tracks, is described by Tretow as being brighter and covered in "sparkling dust" (Tretow, own transcription from interview in Craymer & Hunt 1999).

a very strong visual dimension. The concert as a multiparameter audio-visual package warrants special attention. A multitude of meanings can be embedded in the associated visual presentation, for instance dress, makeup, dancing, body posture, eye-contact with the audience, video projections, and so forth. Very often the sexual appeal of the performer/s is used as a means of stirring the emotions of the audience. In this respect, the body is portrayed in the most physical way possible, and clothing is used to accent the attractiveness of the body. Simon Frith comments:

> Rock stage clothes (like sports clothes) are designed to show the musician's body as instrumental (as well as sexual), and not for nothing does a performer like Bruce Springsteen end a show huddled with his band, as if they had just won the Super Bowl (1996:124 - 125).

Frith also suggests that electronic pop music needs more of a visual stimulus to compensate for the fact that no instruments are physically played on stage, and that an audience would not want to watch performers just standing on stage, not playing. With reference to the Pet Shop Boys, he writes that "the duo realized from the start that computerized instruments freed sounds from a performance context"[70] (Ibid.:6-7). This may be one plausible explanation for the use of visual displays at concerts, but I also believe another reason to be that it is another means of exciting the audience and inciting a feeling of euphoria in them. The audio enhances the visual, and vice versa, to create a strong stimulus for the audience: The more vivid the visual portrayal, and the louder the music, the more lively the audience's response will be. This approach to the concert performance, along with a multitude of musical attributes, can be subjected to analytical scrutiny, in order to locate meaning in popular music recordings and live performances. It is possible then to determine the meaning in the performance, by looking at the desired effect it has on the listener.

The most pronounced form of listener participation in popular music is undoubtedly the

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[70]In an interesting experiment, the Pet Shop Boys took this even one step further by "performing live" a new electronic soundtrack to Sergei Eisenstein's silent film *The Battleship Potemkin* on Trafalgar Square in the autumn of 2004. Although there was much hype about Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe actually being there "on stage", their presence was for the duration of the performance completely overshadowed by the giant projection of the film on a screen behind and above them.

act of dancing to it, or, in a less organised form, moving to music. Simon Frith gives two reasons for why listeners do this, namely the origin of the music, and kinaesthetic empathy (although he does not use this term himself). Frith goes back to the African roots of popular music, where music-making is a group activity in which there is a very high sense of participation, both bodily and mental. He refers to the "rhythm-focused experience of *music-in-the-process-of-production*" (Frith 1996:141) as an aspect of African music that has maintained to exert some residual force in the popular music of today. Dance as a form of kinaesthetic empathy is explained by Frith in the following way:

> People who play musical instruments ... do hear music played on their instrument differently from the way people who don't play the instrument hear it - they listen with a felt, physical empathy. But my general point is that for the popular music audience the easiest way into the music is almost always rhythmically, through regular body movements (we can all participate in the music's percussive action, even if we have no instrumental skills at all) (Ibid.:141 - 142).

He continues later:

> The reason why rhythm is particularly significant for popular music is that a steady tempo and an interestingly patterned beat offer the easiest ways into a musical event; they enable listeners without instrumental expertise to respond 'actively', to experience music as a bodily as well as a mental matter. This has nothing to do with going wild. Rather, a regular beat, some sense of order, is necessary for the participatory process which rhythm describes (we talk about the tempo being 'strict' as a source of discipline). Rhythm, like dance, is always about bodily control (not the lack of it) (Ibid.:143).

If the controlling aspect of rhythm is acknowledged, then it can also be inferred that the tension/release dipole described earlier is equally a dipole of control/liberty or rigidity/fluidity. Herein lies a key to unlocking some information regarding meaning that is located in time aspects of music.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that in the life of every young novice instrumentalist some reference to aspects of timing (for example *rubato*) will be made in terms of

"feeling". If the young student plays rigidly, like a metronome, the teacher will often describe such playing as bloodless, without feeling or devoid of personalised meaning. The conception exists that *rubato* playing cannot be taught and that a student either has and understanding of the music, or not. In a similar vein, subtle aspects of timing in jazz music can seldom be taught or explained, but rather have to be *felt* in order to be understood. Still, even in jazz music that is considered "free" there is always an underlying regularity in at least one of the parts (most commonly the rhythm section) to provide a counterbalance to the fluidity of the freer voices.

To this it can be added that popular music in transmission is arguably most conventional when there is a sense of play between rigidity and fluidity or between restriction and freedom. Therefore, when this sense of play is taken away from popular music, it has to be accepted that the meaning will be altered in some way. The result is that there is an imbalance in favour of either rigidity *or* elasticity so as to tip the scales in a manner that has to affect the meaning in some way. When rigid order in time aspects is absent, the music becomes amorphous, difficult to follow, hard to appreciate and impossible to predict or move to meaningfully. The elasticity of time causes coherence to be lost, because there are no mathematic or musical rules for how the music unfolds in time. Effectively, there is no meaningful way to *feel* the music.

When the opposite happens and there is predominantly or even *only* rigid order, the result can be as subversive. Dave Laing writes the following about punk rock and syncopation:

> More crucial to punk's sense of difference form other musics is its attitude to rhythm. It is here that the apparent paradox of a music both more 'primitive' and 'revisionist' finds its most appropriate application. Perhaps the most characteristic rhythmic feature of music containing Afro-American elements is syncopation (Laing 1985:61).

Laing continues:

> The main reason for the 'undanceability' of much punk rock (and for its adoption of the 'pogo' as a suitable dance form) is that, to quote Christgau, it tends to 'submerge'

> syncopation in its rhythmic patterns. 'Holidays In The Sun' by the Sex Pistols begins with the sound of marching feet, a regular, repetitive, definitely unsyncopated sound. This is followed by the drums falling into the same rhythm. This rhythmic monad (1-1-1-1-), as opposed to rock's conventional dyad (1-2-1-2, where the accent is on the second beat) is a state of entropy (or perfection) to which much punk seems constantly aiming (Ibid.).

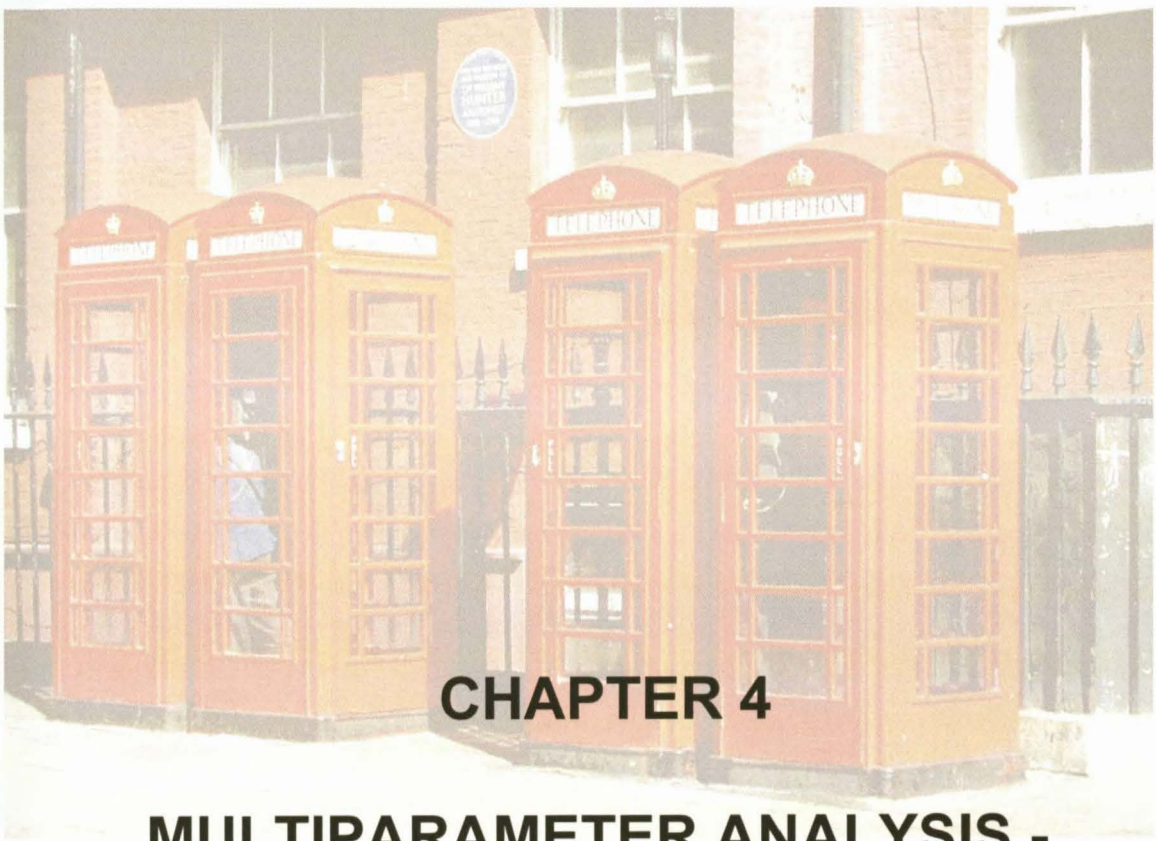
Frith quotes Chernoff to express a similar sentiment:

> 'It is particularly difficult to dance to white rock music', concludes Chernoff, from his Africanist perspective, 'because the main-beat emphasis is retained and the use of off-beat accentuation and multiple rhythms is restricted. There is no room inside the music for movement' (quoted in Frith 1996:144).

These statements about dancing to punk and other rock presuppose a certain level of dancing competence in the listeners/dancers. In the case of punk, the pogo is much more independent of the music than Laing acknowledges. Filmed accounts of pogo dancing show the bodies moving completely out of time with the music. The only correlation between the dancing and the music seems to be the level of intensity - the more intense the music, the more frenzied the dancing. However, I would also like to suggest that the rhythmic monad 1-1-1-1 need not make dancing in time impossible at all. It was shown earlier that listeners have the capacity to supply the missing beats in syncopated passages. I would not exclude the possibility that this same capacity enables the listener to imagine adding the backbeat, or adding the syncopation that is absent, even if only through an activity as base as finger snapping, head bobbing or hip swaying. What becomes apparent from activities such as these is that not all meaning associated with music's temporal aspects is immediately clear in the music at its time of production. Some of the meaning is ascribed at a later stage, through the participation of the listener. The listener's participation is not only in relation or reaction to rhythm, tempo and metre. Other aspects of music can be felt and reacted to, like the frequency of tones, the volume of performance or playback, the timbre and ideological implications of a specific instrument, and so forth.

Whenever a listener is exposed to music, the process of hearing is more than just a passive affair. Listening is an activity, and a partially creative activity at that. Whenever

music is listened to, its meaning is in the process of being constructed. Sometimes this meaning is constructed as an exact replica of a previously recognised meaning (for example when the structure and form are considered), but at the same time a new meaning will be created every time an individual hears, plays, or dances to a song. In popular music the participation of the listener, or the audience, is not just a common phenomenon - it has become a prerequisite for any successful performance. The popularity of the artist and the persuasion of the performance are often measured by the number of times the audience get out of their seats, the degree of dancing in the aisles, and the fervour of the shouting. The structure and the transmission of the music therefore have to be designed to appeal most strongly to the audience's desire to participate. These designs of composition and performance are ultimately the loci of meaning in popular music and it is by studying them that the meaning will become apparent.



Soho Phone Booths, London
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CHAPTER 4

MULTIPARAMETER ANALYSIS - AN APPLICATION TO PUNK ROCK

4

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 of this thesis I gave a broad account of existing approaches to popular music analysis, with comment on the shortcomings, fundamental mistakes, inherent weaknesses and strengths of these methods. It became apparent that the preferred approach to analysis would have to incorporate the best elements from the analytical methodologies of extra-musical disciplines and traditional musicology. The multiparameter approach seems to provide just this - an analytical method that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of music and considers the myriad possible approaches to the analysis thereof. Philip Tagg has provided a very useful framework that can serve as an intelligent vantage point for the analysis of music (cf. pp. 68 - 70 and Figure 2.3 of this thesis). It is not my intention to apply the method wholesale without comparison with, and consideration of other approaches. However, this method comes with a set of terminology that I will use unaltered in the analysis of punk rock. As an illustration of this method framework, I will apply it to a broad body of work, but will illustrate the analytical process with regards to one particular song, "God Save The

Queen" by the Sex Pistols. A discussion of the findings of the analysis of the broad body of work will follow in Chapter 5. However, the discussion of the Sociocultural Field of Study, and the Selection of Material that follows below, should be taken as an introduction to both the illustrative and broad analyses and therefore applicable to both chapters.

1. THE SOCIOCULTURAL FIELD, EMITTER INTERESTS AND RECEIVER INTERESTS

When regarded as analysis object (AO), British punk rock of the first wave (that is 1976 to 1979) certainly promises to be rich in meaning. As the first chapter of this thesis showed, punk rock was pronouncedly linked to the sociocultural situation in Britain of the 1970s and the rise of punk as an iconoclastic youth counterculture. The sociocultural field of study (SCFS) is therefore British youth culture of a particular strand: punk. In the first chapter I already attempted to describe the political, demographic, economic and social circumstances under which punk came into being. I also showed how the emergence of this subculture drew sartorial, behavioural and musical inspiration from the postwar British fabric, how it asserted itself as a youth counterculture, and how it addressed the *status quo* of the parent culture. It is therefore essential that Chapter 1 of this thesis is read as a more detailed definition and description of the SCFS.

Punk rock artists made a very visual stand against the parent culture, as well as the government, racism, sexism, fascism, the monarchy and the music industry. The intuitive expectation would therefore be that this attitude of resistance would have found an outlet in punk rock itself and that the message of punk rock would be undeniably political. However, it was also suggested that punk as a subculture was not necessarily so coherent a movement (if at all it can be dubbed a movement), that the message of punk and the ideology of the man-on-the-street punk culture as a whole were never very clearly defined or continuous, and that the initial ideals of punk were not achieved. Many artists were seen as "sell-outs" to the commercial rewards of rock stardom. Because punk was such a short-lived period in British cultural and musical history, the

transition of the punk rocker from revolutionary to sell-out could be very rapid, engendered by an equally rapid change in the musical style of any one particular performer or group. It is therefore imperative that every song that is subjected to analytical scrutiny be looked at without taking anything for granted about the artist's intent.

2. THE MUSICAL CHANNEL

It is interesting to note that Tagg differentiates between four different musics, or four ways in which music is represented or solidified, namely music as conception, music as notation, music as sounding object, and music as perception. Another way of seeing this could be the inner time/outer time distinction (refer to page 73 of this thesis). Music as sounding object would therefore be music in outer time, whereas music as conception and perception would be music in inner time. Music notation could be seen as the link that can bring music from inner time to outer time, by providing a printed direction for the performance thereof. The Western musical tradition of representing music in printed form aids analysis tremendously, as sheet music notation is the very evidence of a composer's creative thought. The compositions of classical composers, such as Beethoven, Mozart or Stravinsky are documented in more than one form - there are often numerous printed editions of their works, not to mention the countless recorded performances by many orchestras from all over the world. However, in most popular music this is not the case and recordings represent the sole solidification of the artistic output. In addition, whereas we now live in a time where everything to do with popular music seems to be recorded and annotated (think for instance of the manufactured careers of participants and winners of public voting based competitions such as *Fame Academy*, *Pop Idol*, *Pop Stars* and *The X Factor*, where a potential star's progress is tracked from his or her very first televised performance), punk rock was very poorly documented in sound. As already discussed in the first chapter, recording contracts were very scarce and even live performances were extremely difficult to orchestrate, due to the scarcity of performing venues that were willing to stage punk acts. In the case of punk rock, often a single recording by a single group stands as the only documented instance of a song. In a few cases artists and songs

may have disappeared into obscurity altogether. This is part of the access problem referred to by Philip Tagg in his analytical model.

3. SELECTION OF THE METHOD AND MATERIAL

The discussion of analytical approaches to popular music found in Chapter 2 of this thesis should be read as an evaluation process during which I considered a number of existing approaches in order to find an analytical model that is suitable for the study of punk rock. Although it would not be possible to consider or even comprehend all approaches (some of these may require years of study of psychology, sociology, linguistics or cognitive semantics), due consideration was given to many divergent methodologies. As stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter (p. 101) I consider Philip Tagg's Multiparameter Analysis as the most appropriate. I shall therefore adopt and adapt it in my own analysis. This will be explained in greater detail under section 4. ILLUSTRATIVE ANALYSIS OF "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN" below.

Because punk as a cultural entity is no longer "alive", access to the material is difficult and limited, especially since it is impossible now to be part of that cultural segment, to be a participant observer, and so on. For the purposes of this thesis, a conscious selection of material for analysis had to be made. Obviously, this choice had to be exercised with regards to relatively well documented punk rock, that is punk rock that was recorded and distributed in commercial terms. Access to master tapes was not possible, therefore the material had to be gleaned from off-the-shelf purchases in compact disc (CD) and digital versatile disc (DVD) format, as well as commercially available Internet downloads. Live performances that were not recorded can therefore not be considered for analysis. For a musical movement that relied so heavily on the live performance as its main utterance, as indeed was the case with punk rock, this may seem unsatisfactory. The ethos of punk rock was rooted in the moment of production - the performance - as a communication of great immediacy. However, today punk rock has to be analysed in terms of its commodified realisation. Unfortunately, this was part of punk's dilemma from the start: even though it was opposed to the commercialisation of popular music, its legacy could only survive if it expressed itself in those very commercial terms. Punk could only attempt to attack and change the recording industry

by being recorded itself.

For a fair and objective selection of material to be made, some quantifiable parameter had to be used. Ironically yet again, the commercial side of popular music seems to supply the only such parameter - the singles charts. The selection of punk songs that featured in the charts is by no means perfect. It seems punk rock was slow to be absorbed into the charts - not a single punk song from 1976 made it into the top 30, and by 1979 punk had petered out considerably, to be ousted and replaced by New Wave and New Romantic music, often by the very artists that were seen as punk's figureheads. Accordingly, some of punk's most seminal songs like the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy In The UK", The Clash's "White Riot", Chelsea's "Right To Work" and X-Ray Spex's "Oh Bondage! Up Yours!" are absent from the charts. The year 1978 was punk's most prolific in terms of chart appearances. This causes a relatively short period within punk rock to enjoy prominence over the rest of its duration in the selection of songs[71]. However, a selection based on the singles charts is still more satisfying than a subjective selection by the analyst.

In order to ensure a reasonably sized selection of material I decided to consider only songs that made it into the top 20 of the British singles charts during the period 1976 to 1979. A further measure was to limit the number of songs by any one group to no more than three, in which case the three highest ranked songs were chosen. Some songs by the Boomtown Rats[72], the Sex Pistols, Sham 69 and The Stranglers were therefore omitted from the list[73]. After these limiting measures were taken, the final list comprises twenty-six songs by fourteen different groups. They are shown below in

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[71]Statistically speaking half of the songs were released in 1978, none in 1976, 38.46 % in 1977 and 11.54 % in 1979.

[72]Boomtown Rats were from the Republic of Ireland, and therefore not British. However, since this band was signed by a British label and spent most of their career as a punk outfit in London, they have been included here. They returned to Dublin in 1979, to become a mainstream rock group, with successes in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the USA. From 1984 Bob Geldof became increasingly involved with humanitarian issues, and has maintained a high profile both in Eire and Great Britain.

[73]Three further songs cited by Laing to have been in the Top 30 are "5705" by City Boy, "Winker's Song" by Ivor Biggun and "Egyptian Reggae" by Jonathan Richman. However, since I have been unable to track these songs down, their positions in the charts remain unknown.

Table 4.1 sorted by group, song title, year of release and highest chart position.

Table 4.1: PUNK SONGS IN THE BRITISH TOP 20

Group	Title	Year	Position
The Adverts	Gary Gilmore's Eyes	1977	18
The Boomtown Rats	Looking After Number 1	1977	11
	Like Clockwork	1978	6
	Rat Trap	1978	1
The Buzzcocks	Ever Fallen In Love	1978	12
	Promises	1978	20
The Clash	Tommy Gun	1978	19
	London Calling	1979	11
Eddie And The Hot Rods	Do Anything You Wanna Do	1977	9
The Jam	All Around The World	1977	13
Public Image Ltd	Public Image	1978	9
	Death Disco	1979	20
The Rezillos	Top Of The Pops	1978	17
Tom Robinson Band	2-4-6-8 Motorway	1977	5
	Glad To Be Gay	1978	18
The Sex Pistols	God Save The Queen	1977	2
	Holidays In The Sun	1977	8
	Pretty Vacant	1977	6
Sham 69	Hurry Up Harry	1978	10
	If The Kids Are United	1978	9
	Hersham Boys	1979	6
Siouxsie And The Banshees	Hong Kong Garden	1978	7
The Stranglers	No More Heroes	1977	8
	Peaches	1977	8
	Five Minutes	1978	11
X-Ray Spex	Germ Free Adolescents	1978	12

4. ILLUSTRATIVE ANALYSIS OF "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN"

The Analysis Object (AO) chosen to illustrate the analytical process applied to the chosen 26 songs is the sounding object "God Save The Queen" by the Sex Pistols. The analysis will follow Tagg's model, but instead of breaking the analysis down into a Hermeneutic/Semiological section and an Ideological section (an analysis of a set of relationships), I prefer to analyse in terms of structure and transmission. I shall explain the reason for this. I am of the opinion that the ideological aspect of the music comes to the fore in both the structure *and* the performance or recording. The relationships that Tagg's Ideological section considers are best articulated in performance, but they are already present in the structure. For example, I would consider lyrics (arguably the strongest vehicle for ideology) as part of the structure, but recording techniques that manipulate the stance of the voice would be an aspect of the transmission. It would therefore be artificial and indeed very difficult for me to analyse the music strictly in musical terms first, and then in sociological or ideological terms. Tagg's flow diagram does suggest a degree of hierarchy and time-structure - if it is read from the top, it would strongly suggest that an ideological analysis could be performed only *after* a thorough musical analysis has been completed. Figure 4.1 shows a slightly re-worked version of Tagg's flow diagram.

Naturally, aspects of Tagg's division (Hermeneutic - Ideological) will find their way into my own analysis, but they will not be the main force of reasoning. I would like to see these two sections as not being separated by a clear division (as Tagg's illustration would suggest), but would rather like to show how they complement each other, and how the ideology finds an expressive force in the actual sounding object. I shall deviate further by not performing Hypothetical Substitution between the AO and Interobjective Comparison Material (IOCM) in terms of merely comparing the AO with actual instances of existing music, but rather by alluding to standard practices or features of the rock idiom, within the Western musical *langue*.

For the analysis of "God Save The Queen" I am looking at two utterances, namely a studio recording of the song, as well as a promotional video clip that depicts a seemingly live performance. However, as I shall explain later, the video clip has a

dubbed soundtrack (that of the studio recording) which reduces the live performance to no more than a lipsynched, simulated performance. There is therefore only one sounding object.

4.1 Structure

The compositional structure of this song will be looked at with Tagg's "checklist of parameters" as a starting point. However, instead of going down the list as if it were an instruction manual, I shall use it exactly for what it is - a checklist to ensure that my own method is sane and comprehensive.

4.1.1 Form-schematic sections

The song is clearly divided into fifteen smaller sections, that in turn can all be classified as one of six types, which I have identified as A, B, C, D, E and F (cf. Examples 4.1.a to 4.1.f) This classification can be described thus:

A introduction (guitar with bass and drums), appearing once
B guitar call and response pattern (chord, with rhythmic breaks), appearing once
C vocal call and response pattern (verse, with rhythmic breaks), appearing 7 times
D vocal bridge, appearing twice
E guitar solo, appearing once
F coda (vocal chanting), appearing 3 times

The song can therefore be presented by a very simple time-line (mins:secs), as follows:

A(00:00)—B^1(00:07)—C^1(00:20)—C^2(00:33)—D^1(00:45)—C^3(00:58)—C^4(01:11)----------C^5(01:24)—D^2(01:37)—C^6(01:50)—E(02:03)—C^7(02:18)—F^1(02:32)—F^2(02:44)----------F^3(02:57)—End(03:17).

The A section comprises four bars[74], with the first two and the fourth being virtually identical, and the third bar being a variation on these. The B and C sections are harmonically and rhythmically homologous, with C being an elaboration of B, as the vocal line is added on top of the basic B structure. Both B and C are eight bars long, consisting of four groupings of two bars each. Of these two-bar units, the first three are identical, while the fourth lends from the first two bars of A. The eight bar long D sections sound like traditional rock song bridge passages, although they also have an own element of importance in themselves as carrying relevant emphatic material - the repeated utterance "No Future" (this will be discussed in more detail below). The D sections also borrow a transposed rhythmic/melodic motif from the third bar of the A section, but not to the extent that it paraphrases A, as was the case with B and C. The E section is a 15 second long guitar solo that stretches over nine bars. It does not contain any particularly distinctive thematic material and the vocalist does not take part in this section at all. There does not seem to be any thematic relation between the solo and any of the other sections, as the solo consists mainly of guitar chords, without a strong melodic element. The F sections are each eight bars long (three similar two-bar units, followed by a two-bar phrase ending) and are rhythmically very different from the other sections. They contain the longest sustained notes in this otherwise rather choppy song. This is a particular aspect of the vocal melodic line and represents a rhythmic slow-down, with the shortest melodic note being a crotchet, as opposed to a quaver in all the other sections. The F sections therefore form a very effective chant-like coda to this song.

The way this song is constructed deviates from the traditional Tin Pan Alley or rock-'n-roll formulas of verse and refrain. The most common formulas involve verses, bridges and refrains configured in rather predictable ways, where the song title normally occurs in the chorus, and where the bridge section links the verses to the chorus in a way that clearly sounds like a transition. With "God Save The Queen" there are no clearly demarcated chorus sections, and the lyric material one would normally expect to find in a chorus, is found in the verses. Furthermore, the two bridge sections (D) are both

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[74]The bars referred to here correlate with my own transcription of the song. The suggestion is not that the Sex Pistols were necessarily thinking in these terms, but the use of these music theoretical concepts aids the analytical process considerably.

wedged between two verses (C) and therefore do not represent a transition from verse to chorus at all. An observation worth making is that this song has what might be called a double lyric thrust. When the lyrics were written by John Lydon, he entitled the song "No Future". However, the title was changed to "God Save The Queen" upon Malcolm McLaren's insistence. Despite this change in title, not much was changed in the lyrics themselves, and therefore it can be accepted that both "no future" and "God save the queen" are important phrases. They are also the most often recurring phrases in the song. I therefore consider both the verse and bridge sections of this song as carrying the importance that would traditionally be associated with chorus material. A further point is that the coda (F) is the closest thing to a traditional chorus section that this song has to offer, apart from the fact that it occurs only at the end of the song.

4.1.2 Tonality

This song is very firmly placed in the realm of major/minor functional tonality. The tonal centre of the song is clearly A major, and harmonic excursions are made to E major and B major.

4.1.3 Harmony

Harmonically speaking "God Save The Queen" is rather unadventurous and the harmonic distance traversed in the song is small. Very interestingly though, the harmonic tension between tonic and dominant is largely avoided in this song, with the occurrence of the subdominant outnumbering that of the dominant by far. In total, the dominant chord occurs only four times in the entire song. Three of these occurrences are in C sections (C^3, C^6 and C^7), where the dominant replaces the subdominant in the sixth bar of the section. The fourth occurrence of the dominant is at the end of the guitar solo (E), where the e-g♯-b acts as a pivot chord B:IV | A:V. However, this lack of tonic/dominant tension in the tonic key notwithstanding, there are three instances of tonic/dominant tension in other keys: E major in the D sections, and B major in the E section. The D and E sections are the most intense parts of the song - the singing in D is more excited than in the other parts, while the guitar solo represents the most

energetic guitar playing in the entire song. The harmonic rhythm in the D sections is also faster than in the other sections, making for a greater sense of momentum. This is complemented by the drummer playing the hi-hat cymbals in quavers, as opposed to the crotchets in all other sections. The choice of harmonic polarity (tonic - dominant) here is appropriate, as the resultant harmonic progressions in root position are very strong, supporting the very important bridge sections and maintaining the momentum in the guitar solo. At the end of the solo the dominant of the main tonal centre is extended over two bars, effectively adding a ninth bar to a section that traditionally would have only been eight bars long.

A harmonic synopsis of this song could therefore be as follows:

The A section consists of just two chords: the tonic power chord (a-e) and the leading note power chord (g♯-d♯)[75].

The B section consists of the harmonic progression: I-IV-I^6-IV-I^6-I, played three times, followed by the leading note power chord - tonic power chord figure from A.

Sections C^1, C^2, C^4 and C^5 have the same harmonic make-up as B.

Sections C^3, C^6 and C^7 consist of the I-IV-I^6-IV-I^6-I progression played twice, followed by I-V-I. The last bar of C^3 consists of a tonic chord on the first beat, followed by a single g natural on the division of the third beat (cf. Example 4.2), therefore suggesting I^7, or more likely a subtonic g-b-d. The last bar of C^7 consists of an ascending scale-like progression leading up to the subdominant chord that the F section starts with (cf. Example 4.3). This consists of I-ii-bIII-vii° leading to IV. Another way to see this would be to regard the beginning of the first F section as temporarily tonicising d, in which case the progression in the last bar of C^7 would be D: V-vi-bVII-vii° leading to D:I at the beginning of F^1.

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[75]As explained in Chapter 3, the power chord always consists of a perfect fifth. The augmented leading note chord that is suggested here is therefore not out of the ordinary and does not suggest an extraordinary chromatic alteration here. It simply replicates, at the distance of a perfect fifth above, the semitone movement between the leading note and the tonic. This is reasonably standard guitar playing and is more of a sonic (timbral) than a harmonic device.

The D sections tonicise e. They consist of only three chords, namely E:I, V and V^6. Although the D sections contain material derived from A, there is no use of the power chord on d♯. This chord is substituted by the first inversion of the dominant. The final E:I is then used as a pivot chord | E:I | A:V | to return to A major.

The E section tonicises b. It consists of only B:V, I and IV, which is then used as a pivot chord | B:IV | A:V | to return to A major.

The F sections can be considered as being in either A major, or as tonicising d, therefore being temporarily in D major. Their harmonic make-up is therefore either A: IV-I^6-ii or D: I-V^6-vi. However, at the ends of these sections there is always a strong implication of the tonic of A major.

It is clear that the harmonic mainstay of this song is the tonic/sub-dominant relation, with the tonic/dominant relation in a supportive role. However, there still is a strong gravitational pull from the subdominant towards the tonic, especially because of the occurrence of the tonic first inversion chords in the signature harmonic riff of the B and C sections. In the case of "God Save The Queen", voice-leading plays a very important part in determining the forward momentum. The use of first inversions therefore avoids the disjointedness resulting from the block chordal accompaniment so often associated with rock music, and provides an impetus for the resolution of harmonies that do not have their root in the bass. In fact, the stepwise bass-line movements that result from the use of chords in first inversion are present in all sections apart from A (that has stepwise movement anyway) and E, where the use of chords in root position causes the bass to jump the interval of a perfect fourth. It seems then that, in the absence of a leading note that wants to resolve in stepwise motion upwards, the Sex Pistols ensure the downward resolution towards the tonic by letting the subdominant chord resolve to a tonic in first inversion first, before finally resting on the tonic in root position.

Stepwise descending bass patterns make up the three F sections at the end of the song too. Once again the subdominant chord in A (or tonic in D) is followed by a tonic in first inversion (or dominant in first inversion in D) that seems to want to resolve downwards,

in the direction of the tonic root position (or dominant in D). However, in the case of the coda, this resolution is procrastinated twice before this chord in root position is finally reached. The listener's ability to predict this movement to the tonic in A (or dominant in D) builds up an expectation, or suspense, that more than compensates for the absence of a dominant harmony here and a leading note that wants to resolve upwards to a tonic. In this case, as well as in the B and C sections above, the upper voice (guitar in the case of B and C, and vocals in the case of F) doubles up on the bass, so that the voice-leading in the bass is replicated and emphasised by the main melody. This strengthens the harmonic momentum in the absence of the contrary motion voice-leading that is normally associated with a perfect cadence.

4.1.4 Melody

Vocal melody in this song is discernable only in the two D sections and the three F sections. The A, B and E sections have no vocals, and the singing in the C sections is not of the conventional melodic kind, but rather comprises a combination of heightened speech, shouting and hollering. As a result of this, the melodic elements that will be looked at are the vocal lines of D and F, as well as the lead guitar melodies found in A, B and C.

As mentioned in the last paragraph of 4.1.3 above, the melodic line often copies the bass, so that the melodic quality of the bass riff is also heard as the top layer of the sonic texture. This is the case for the entire A section and all the F sections (although the vocal line is in minims and the bass broken down into quavers, with anticipatory changes of pitch). The phenomenon is also found in the B and C sections, but here the combination of accentuating and masking of notes creates a resultant melody that is rhythmically not identical to the bass (cf. Example 4.4). This resultant melodic figure, the leading note/tonic quaver figure found in A, B, C and D, and the main melodies of the bridge and the coda constitute the most important melodic components of the song. The bridge sections (D) break away from the tendency to double the bass in the upper voice (cf. Example 4.5), although the lead guitar still duplicates the bass line in the second half of the two-bar semi-phrase. In the case of F there are three melodic permutations of the same basic figure, with the only differences being the rhythmic

adjustments that are made to the original figure (cf. Example 4.6).

The melodic range of this song is very small, spanning only a perfect fifth, from a below middle c to e above. The melodies are very simple, and almost without fail stepwise. In the main melodic lead guitar theme from the B and C sections, there is an interval of a perfect fourth upward (a - d), followed by the semitone movements (d - c♯ - d - c♯), and ending with a downward major third (c♯ - a). These intervals of a fourth and third are the largest two melodic intervals in the song and are played by guitar and bass, as opposed to being sung, thus rendering this song technically very undemanding to sing. Melodically speaking, the song is therefore very limited, with no instances of counter-melodies. There are no examples of contrapuntal movement - movement seems to always be in the same direction in all the voices.

4.1.5 Orchestration and texture

The Sex Pistols consisted at any given time during their recording career of just four members, with Johnny Rotten providing vocals to the backing of Steve Jones on electric guitar, Paul Cook on drums and Glenn Matlock and later Sid Vicious on electric bass. On this recording the band consists of Rotten/Jones/Cook/Vicious, and therefore the texture is made up of vocals, guitar, bass and drum kit. From what one can derive from the recording, the drum kit consisted of kick drum, snare drum, floor tom, one or two pitched toms, hi-hat cymbals and two differently pitched suspended cymbals. There are no backing vocals on this recording, apart from in the coda, although it is uncertain whether these are sung by the band members, or whether they are overdubs of Rotten's own voice.

The A section is played by bass, drums and guitar that is not greatly distorted. The same applies to the B section, although the sustained A major chords sound more distorted now. In sections C^1 and C^2 the sustained A major chords disappear altogether to be replaced by rather "dry" *staccato* quavers played at lower dynamic level, so as not to mask the vocals. However, the guitar break sections (when the vocals are absent) are similar to the ones in the B section. In C^3 the guitar accompaniment is the same as in B, with the sustained chords played at a lower dynamic level. The vocals are

therefore still foregrounded and clearly audible. In this section the drummer does not keep time on the hi-hat, as he did in B and the previous two C sections, but plays the crotchets on the lower of the two pitched suspended cymbals. In the last bar of C^3 the guitar and bass play only the very first beat and then are quiet during the drum fill. At the end of the bar the guitar plays a sole g. C^4 , C^5 and C^6 are the same as C^1 and C^2, but the line "Oh Lord God have mercy" in C^5 is longer than the corresponding lines in other C sections and therefore overlaps with the guitar break, resulting in a denser texture, but with the vocals still audibly foregrounded. In C^7 the hi-hat is used again instead of the lower cymbal. In the D sections the drummer plays the hi-hat notes as quavers, instead of crotchets, which creates a more intense and dense feel. The guitar solo naturally calls for the guitar to be played at a higher dynamic level, and with a lot more distortion. It becomes virtually impossible to discern any specific notes, and the chords have a great amount of "fuzz" around them. The sustained vocal notes in the F sections ensure audibility over the guitar and bass that play shorter notes as accompaniment to the vocals. This is an important feature of the song: At no point are the vocals obscured or masked by the instruments. The vocals are always audible and the words clearly discernable.

4.1.6 Temporal and durational considerations

The duration of the recording of "God Save The Queen" is 3 minutes 17 seconds. It can be accepted with little doubt that the brevity of the recording is in part the result of the physical limitation placed on the length by the dissemination format, the seven inch vinyl single. The progressive rock bands that were at the height of their popularity during the late 1960s and the 1970s hardly ever released their material in single format, precisely because of the limitation that this medium placed on the music. Punk rock, however, rebelled against what they considered the pretence and unnecessary pomp associated with the extremely long album tracks of the prog rockers, and preferred the single format.

However, the length of this song is not only the product of the single format. The immediacy associated with a song that says everything the artist wanted to within three and a half minutes is a certain contributory factor. Everything is distilled down to and

concentrated in a short burst of energy, without being too florid and poetic. In the case of "God Save The Queen" there is such a limited stock of material to work with that it would be unthinkable to extend the song over a much longer period anyway.

With the urgency and immediacy comes also the relatively fast tempo - approximately 150 beats per minute. Although this is reasonably slow compared to the 198 bpm of "Top Of The Pops" by the Rezillos (a song that was analysed for this thesis), it compares thus with the following well-known disco dance tracks from the late 1970s: ABBA's "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A man after midnight)" is played at 116 bpm and Voulez-Vous at 128, Donna Summer's "Bad Girls" is at 124 bpm and "I Feel Love" at 128, and the BeeGees' "Stayin' Alive" is played at a mere 104 bpm. Compared to these songs, "God Save The Queen" makes for considerably faster dancing, but also dancing of a different kind. Whereas disco dancing was very stylised[76] and often designed with the expression of sexuality in mind, pogoing was not so. There are no complicated, articulated movements in the pogo, and for this reason *faster* was often considered *better*.

Unlike 1950s rock-'n-roll or 1970s disco or funk's various treatments of the backbeat, it is not so prominently emphasized in "God Save The Queen". In the A, B and C sections the snare drum is used to enhance the strength of the rhythmic pattern of the various guitar and bass figures (cf. Example 4.7). However, in the D, E and F sections the snare drum is more conventional and brings out the backbeat according to the established rock convention. This treatment is rather more fluent than in the other instances and results in a less complicated drumming pattern that enables and encourages freer movement to the music. It attracts less attention to itself and is therefore less of a distraction.

Syncopation occurs sporadically in this song, but is not the rhythmic mainstay. The guitar response pattern, or rhythmic break from the B and C sections has an element of syncopation, although it has been suggested that this syncopated pattern is a

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[76]During the 1970s disco craze, many illustrated self-instruct manuals were sold to individuals who wanted to learn rather complex moves like the "San Francisco Hustle" and the "Bus Stop".

resultant rhythmic pattern caused by accentuation and masking. However, it sounds like a syncopated pattern, simply because some of the notes are not played at the same high dynamic level and therefore sound like they have simply been tied over. This would not be possible in the vocals, as every new syllable of every word needs a new attack in order to be pronounced, and therefore cannot be tied over. The vocals of "God Save The Queen" are remarkably unsyncopated, with the exception of the two D sections (compare once again Examples 4.1c, 4.1d and 4.6). It seems, though, that the rhythmic patterns of the verses (C sections) are mostly derived from ordinary speech with few instances of syncopated or melismatic "singing". This attempts to make the utterance more ordinary, so as not to create any distance between the vocalist and the listener. Any artistic pretence is therefore stripped down so as to make the vocalisation more like everyday speech than like florid singing.

Instrumentally speaking, all in all there are very few different rhythmic configurations in the entire song, especially since there is such a high incidence of repetition of material. For instance, the rhythmic material of A finds its way into B, C and D. A consists of just two rhythmic patterns, namely the one found in the first bar, and the one found in the third bar (and even this figure consists of the same motif played twice). The B and C sections consist only of the two bar long call and response pattern, and the first rhythmic pattern from A. Therefore it can be said that A, B and C, which constitute a very large portion of the song, are built on just three rhythmic patterns. D introduces one new rhythmic pattern, but the rest of D consists of the second pattern from A. As shown before, F consists of a very simple, slow rhythmic pattern with three slightly varied permutations[77]. It can be concluded then that, in reality, A, B, C D and F are made up of just four rhythmic groups.

Most of the vocal rhythmic figures in the song are additive, therefore moving towards longer notes at the ends of motifs. This means that most of the rhythmic propulsion or momentum is normally largely lost midway through the sung phrases. It is then up to the rhythmic breaks to restore momentum as an answer to the loss experienced. It is

[77]The rhythmic patterns referred to here are found in the vocal part, but represents the only rhythmically defined material in the F section. The guitar and bass just play quavers, and the drums have a simple drumming pattern, with ordinary marking of the backbeat.

therefore quite interesting to study the call-and-response nature of the verse sections. During the first half of the vocal phrase there is relative stasis in the bass and guitar parts. However, in the break section, when the vocalist is either quiet or sustaining longer notes, the guitar and bass play a much more active part in keeping the movement going. The C sections therefore never seem to drag, because there is always forward-moving impetus from either the vocals or the guitar and bass. In the case of the D sections, the call-and-response practice is replaced by simultaneous rhythmic dynamism in the voice and the instruments. The vocalist adds additional syllables to his utterances, thereby heightening the intensity even more and maintaining a high profile. Attention is therefore not allowed to divert form the vocalisation. Instead, the vocal utterance consistently remains the focal point throughout the D sections. The complementary rhythmic play between the vocals and instruments in "God Save The Queen" is in part reminiscent of the 12-bar blues call-and-response practice, although it deviates harmonically, as well as in terms of the number of bars, from the original model. The song therefore deconstructs and re-appropriates this practice to deliver a product that is at once conventional *and* negational.

In conclusion it can be said that this song's approach to aspects of time is a combination of sticking to traditional practices and a tendency to jettison these traditions in favour of an unconventional, unsophisticated approach. The strict metre, the four-bar phrases, fast tempo and consistency thereof remind of established practices, but the absence of syncopation, inconsistent emphasis on the backbeat and peculiar call-and-response interplay represent a break with tradition.

The analysis so far has shown that the musical makeup of "God Save The Queen" is very basic indeed, to the point where one could think that it is completely lacking in any artistic imagination or value. Of course, the music is *not* meaningless or without value or merit. If that was the case, then the analysis would come to an end right here, with some conclusions about the infantile use of harmony, melody, rhythmic patterns and so forth. However, the purpose of this analysis is to consider more than the mere musical building blocks of the song. Other aspects will be considered below, including the lyrics and the transmission of the music. The very primitive musical structure therefore only acts as a facilitator for the more pertinent message-bearers. It is the

vehicle that enables the Sex Pistols to make any sort of public statement by means of a cultural or artistic product. The fact of the matter is that the band wanted to communicate through music (as opposed to literature, graphic art or even politics), albeit unsophisticated music. This is not to say that the music, as it exists in theory, is completely devoid of meaning. The very basic and vaguely defined meanings associated with western rock music are still there, but they are not the most prominent conveyors of meaning. The music therefore mainly enables the process of communication by giving it motion, or a space within which to communicate. The strongest communicators are situated not in the musical structure, but in the musical delivery and the textual references to the extramusical world.

4.1.7 Lyrics

The lyrics of "God Save The Queen"are a fine display of extreme irony. Most obvious is the allusion made to the British national anthem and all the notions of pomp and patriotism associated with it. The song was written in 1977, the year of Queen Elizabeth's silver jubilee. Its release was timed so it would peak at the top of the British Top 20 during the week of the celebrations and street procession. However, the BBC refused to acknowledge that the song was the top selling single of that week, and it remained at number 2. The song faced the added difficulties of factory workers refusing to work on the production line of the single, and Boots and Woolworths refusing to stock the item on their shelves. Radio stations imposed an almost country-wide blanket ban on the single and it did not enjoy the amount of radio airtime that other singles from the Top 20 did. The nation's celebration of the queen's 25 years on the throne gave rise to this song, in which the Sex Pistols express their discontent with the English public. In the case of the Sex Pistols song a false sense of patriotism and royalism is used as a thinly veiled critique of not so much the state, as its people.

The opening two stanzas are probably the most controversial and poignant:

God save the queen
The fascist regime
It made you a moron

Potential H-bomb

God save the queen
She ain't no human being
And there's no future
In England's dreaming

The queen is described here in no uncertain terms as an obsolete icon. Through their reverence of her the public elevate her to a super-human status, but the Sex Pistols see her as the opposite. The government and the nation have reduced her to a sub-human commodity with no true purpose or powers. She is reduced to a "moron". The description of the government as "fascist" is particularly caustic, but the song wants to bring across the constant sense of menace that the government represents. The xenophobia of the English towards Pakistanis and Afro-Caribbeans is a real cause for concern for the Sex Pistols, because it fills the imperialist sentiment and the national pride with the added poison of supremacy. The belief in the "English way" has a destructive potential, because it excludes immigrants and segregates communities. The recognition of a monarch presupposes the idea that some people are supreme by birth. The queen has not become head of state by any doing of her own - it is a privilege of birth, but she has not achieved anything. This is also why she is a "moron": she does not have to do anything to ensure that she remains queen. In a way she becomes the subject of pity here. She is also a victim of her circumstances and a prisoner of her own fate as a national "mascot". However, the working-class interests of the Sex Pistols prevent them from sympathising and their sentiment "God save the queen" is not sincere.

In the next section, the bridge, the Sex Pistols make a direct address to the British (English) nation:

Don't be told what you want and
Don't be told what you need
There's no future, no future
No future for you

The restrictions imposed on people by the "fascist regime" are destroying their future.

If they carry on supporting this regime and readily accepting its doctrine and law, they forfeit their right to an optimistic future. England and its celebration of one person and her family, but simultaneous marginalisation of others, is an unnatural, false utopia with vacuous ideals and a great sense of occasion for the celebration of those ideals.

The insincerity of the Sex Pistols' celebration comes to the fore with this highly ironic stanza:

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

Clearly the Sex Pistols mean the opposite of what they say here (this is very apparent in the way this section is sung, which will be discussed under 4.2.2 below). In the original version of the song the last phrase of this stanza was "God saves human beings". With the earlier statement "She ain't no human being", Rotten shows his irreverence for the queen by suggesting that God would not protect her because she is inhuman.

The last two of the "God save the queen" stanzas lead as follows:

God save the queen
'Cause tourists are money
And our figurehead
Is not what she seems

O God save history
God save your mad parade
O Lord God have mercy
All crimes are paid

Comment is made here on the fact that the royal family are a major tourist attraction, with their traditions, their wealth, treasures, properties and jewellery and art collections generating large amounts of revenue from tourism. However, the song points out that

below the exterior surface the queen represents a sinister side that the tourists do not see. She is aloof and represents inequality rather than the people themselves. Her wealth and glory are unattainable by the real English people. The song further points out that the celebration of the queen is actually a celebration of her past glory as a conqueror of the world and its nations, despite the atrocities committed in the name of the queen.

The second of the bridge passages is the last bit of new material presented in the song. Everything hereafter is just reiterations of previous sections. The bridge leads:

When there's no future
How can there be sin?
We're the flowers in the dustbin
We're the poison in your human machine
We're the future, your future

The reference to "sin" here links up to "crimes" in the previous stanza. Sin and crimes both lead to punishment later in life, but this can only happen if there is indeed a future. The young working class people are the ones discarded from society. They are the people who are rejected and ostracised, but they are also the people who can make the current system grind to a halt. Only the recognition that England is built on lies and a false sense of self-importance can make people realise that they have to change to ensure a brighter future. They have to wake up from the dream.

The bottom line of the song is that there is no logical way of justifying English/British patriotism in its current form and that the imperialist and colonialist aspiration of the country should be consigned to the past. The true future of the country is not in the hands of the government, but in the hands of the working class youth. Royalism will not yield any rewards for the country, but proletarian unity will.

4.2 Performance / Transmission

Certain elements of the performance have already been touched upon in the discussion

of the structure of "God Save The Queen". That is because, in the case of rock music, the structure is so embedded in the performance. For instance, a description of the orchestration also takes into account *how* a certain instrument is played - loud and with distortion, or at a low dynamic level in shorter, crisp notes that do not drown out the other voices. Furthermore, because punk rock is not written down, the structure cannot be studied by looking at the sheet music, as is the case with classical music. The structure of rock music only becomes apparent in the moment of production. In the case of classical music, one normally assumes that the orchestra (for example) executes the music according to the directions of the sheet music. Classical compositional analysis is therefore not necessarily an analysis of a sounding object, but rather a theoretical exercise based on an ideal situation of correct performance. In rock music, however, there is no such baseline model to work from and the song as sounding object is the only material that can be considered. In the analysis of "God Save The Queen" the sheet music acts not as a prescriptive document, but rather as a descriptive one, having been produced by the analyst *after* hearing the sounding object. Therefore the analysis of the structure above has in a way already been an analysis of the performance itself. However, there are a number of issues not dealt with already that I wish to explore here.

4.2.1 Acoustics, electromusical and mechanical aspects

The recording venue for "God Save The Queen" is unknown, although it is quite evidently a dry acoustic environment. There is not a high degree of echo or ambient reverberation, and the recorded sound seems largely unaltered by production-associated manipulation. The mix-down sounds fairly straightforward, with vocals in the front, guitar and bass in the middle, and drums at the rear of the mix. Furthermore, the vocals are placed in the centre, with the guitar and bass. The drum kit is mainly centred, although the toms and higher pitched suspended cymbal are panned to the right, while the lower pitched suspended cymbal is panned to the left. The drums sound rather fat, although the kick drum does not seem to have a very high yield in the low frequencies, resulting in a rather top-heavy drum sound. It is clear that the suspended cymbals are not dampened during the performance, and they therefore ride for relatively long periods, especially in the case of the lower pitched cymbal. The bass

frequencies from the bass guitar are either filtered out to an extent, or absent, as the entire recording seems to lean toward the higher frequencies. The voice is never distorted and is quite clearly captured in the foreground. However, it is not foregrounded to the point where one would consider it to be in the confidential stance, but is rather subject to interference from (though not masking by) the instrumental backing.

"God Save The Queen" is not a shining example of high production values. The recording has not been subjected to heavy manipulation by a *Tonmeister* to create a technically advanced *work* as Albin Zak would understand the term (refer once again to section 2. Transmission of the previous chapter of this thesis). Although multi-track recording technique was already quite advanced in the 1970s, with groups like ABBA using as many as sixteen, or even thirty-two tracks, the ensemble composition of the Sex Pistols did not warrant the use of such a great number of channels. The recording was made for Virgin Records which, although small compared to EMI (of which it would in later years become a subsidiary), had already established itself as a recording house that enjoyed a sizeable market share in Britain. It is therefore unlikely that the Sex Pistols did not have access to state-of-the-art recording facilities - Mike Oldfield had released the technically superb *Tubular Bells* previously for Virgin. The decision to record the single "God Save The Queen" in this very basic form must therefore have been a conscious one. The laid-down recording attempts to capture very accurately the sound of the band playing live. Very interestingly, the mix-down partially resembles a very typical spatial arrangement of a live performance: the vocalist and the two guitarists (bass and lead) are amplified centrally on the left-to-right axis, with the vocalist put in front on the front-to-back axis. The drum kit sits in the centre and back, with the kick drum, snare drum and toms in the middle, the hi-hat and one of the cymbals to the left of the drummer (but to his right from the audience's point of view), and the other cymbal to his right. However, whereas the drum kit in its entirety is positioned *between* the two guitarists in the live spatial arrangement, it is panned to the left and the right of the guitars on the recording. This is interesting, but perfectly explicable. Of all the instruments and voices, the drums and the vocals are the only ones that produce their sounds acoustically. The two guitars are amplified through live feeds and therefore produce their sounds in centralised locations (the amplifier/s) that are spatially removed

from them, while the voice produces its sound in one place and through one channel (the mouth), which is then also amplified through a centralised location (the amplifier). However, the drum kit produces its sounds in physical space, but in varied positions in relation to the microphone/s. This results in the particular three-dimensional sound box of the drum track, upon which the other tracks are then merely superimposed. This three-dimensional sound-space is best observed with the use of headphones, but it must be noted that the song was recorded well in advance of the meteoric rise in popularity of personal stereo systems like Sony's Walkman in the early 1980s. I therefore cannot claim with any degree of certainty that the re-creation of the spatial sound characteristic of a live performance was at all as calculated as my analysis would suggest, at least not on such a detailed level.

What is certain, though, is that the natural-sounding recording has an air of directness and honesty that cannot be found in heavily manipulated recordings of artists that try to conceal their vocal or technical inadequacies by means of post-performance treatments of their recordings. The quality of Rotten's recorded singing must therefore be rather close to that of his actual studio performance. The same applies with respect to the other band members' playing. The emphasis of the song is on ruggedness and crassness, not on producing a smooth, highly engineered sound. The ethos of the song is not refinement, but attention-grabbing iconoclasm with a direct, unadulterated appeal. This is reflected very accurately in the recording conditions and the resulting sound.

4.2.2 Vocal performance

Although the Sex Pistols have a reasonably recognisable sound as a group, the trademark Sex Pistols sound is largely a result of the singing of the front man, Johnny Rotten. It is true that Steve Jones and Paul Cook had a rather limited stock of guitar and drum patterns that find their way into many of Sex Pistols' songs and make them discernable as such, but the sneering singing in that particular voice and in that particular accent made Johnny Rotten *the* unmistakable Sex Pistols sound.

Rotten's rendition of "God Save The Queen" is rather energetic and full of fervour, although, compared to other Sex Pistols songs, it is also rather tame. As mentioned

before, his singing is a combination of heightened speech, shouting and hollering, although in this particular song, the heightened speech seems to be the most prevalent type of utterance. Conventional melody is mostly absent, but the voice still has upward and downward inclinations, but without identifiable pitches. Rotten sings in an exaggerated East End working class accent and clearly revels in making a mockery of the monarchy. The added syllable on "moron" ("mo-ron-er") illustrates that he takes great pleasure in belittling the queen. The added syllables in the bridge section increase the fervour and energy and the resulting rendition can only be approximated in the following way:

Don'(t) be tol-le-de wha-at you want-er an' er (Don't be told what you want and)
Don't be tol-le-de wha-at ya nee-da (Don't be told what you need)

The intensity of this direct address to the listener is enhanced by the way in which Rotten exploits the sonic qualities of the words. When he finds the sonic possibilities of the words themselves wanting, he adds syllables in order to give him more material to work with.

In another manipulation of the sound quality of a word, every time the phrase "We mean it man" occurs, Rotten draws the word "man" out more, to intensify the feeling of a forced politeness, and to illustrate his insincerity. His voice has a very unrefined and base quality here that teeters on the brink of vocal distortion. He clearly exerts himself in singing this phrase, showing that his feeling of insincerity is in fact sincere. He really does not "mean it", and he wants to bring that across in a way that will leave no questions unanswered. At this moment the singer and the author of the song are undeniably one, so that the expression of the author's ideas and the expression of the singer's emotions have become one simultaneous event. At this point Rotten is both *auteur* and *metteur* - he uses his personal style of singing to great effect, but the expression of the sentiment in the words is at the forefront of his singing. He is not character-acting - he is truly angry and genuinely hateful of the queen.

Two instances where Rotten *is* character-acting can be found in the phrases "'Cause tourists are money" and "Oh Lord God have mercy". In the first instance the utterance

is in very short syllables, with an upward intonation on the word "money". Rotten captures greed in this utterance, but he does so by impersonating a stereotypical greedy money-maker. It is quite obvious that he mimics someone else here, and that his personal feelings do not coincide with those of the capitalist society. In the second example the words are sung like a supplication, or like a chant from a liturgy. Once again the singer's performance is mimetic here and not sincere, as he mocks the religious practices of the nation. In both these instances the singer acts as *metteur*, and in both cases he does so with ridicule in mind.

The last vocal phrase of particular interest is the one found in the coda. Here the rhythm has been slowed down, so that the sung notes are predominantly minims. The coda represents the most conventional type of singing from Rotten in the entire song. The "No future" phrases are sung like an anthemic chant, almost like a mantra, perhaps so as to suggest that this is a new anthem for Britain, to replace the old "God Save The Queen". This is the rallying cry of the song: There is no future for anybody.

Rotten's vocal performance could be described as a highly coded textual interpretation where the use of the voice as instrument ("instrument of torture" in Rotten's own words [quoted in Hibbert 1994:279]) is particularly rich in meaning. One can refer again to Roland Barthes's *pheno-song* and *geno-song* (see section 2.3 Performance analysis of Chapter 2 of this thesis): this distinction makes perfect sense and is relatively clear in the case of Rotten's vocal rendition of the song. The voice is in service of both language and music at the same time, but in a very special relation to both of these. The relation to language is rather uncomplicated, and it is possible to analyse the performance by means of literary analysis. However, the relation to music, which only becomes apparent in the actual performance is more complex. The deliberate exaggeration and distortion of pronunciation (more than mere accenting) are laden with embedded meaning[78], especially by means of allusion. A more detailed analysis of the vocal performance, of the type that Daley performed on Patti Smith's rendition of "Gloria" (Daley 1998), may reveal categories of vocal devices, like intonation, inflection,

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[78]This practice was particularly favoured by Rotten. In "Anarchy In The UK" the word "anarchist" is pronounced to rhyme with "Anti-Christ", while in "Pretty Vacant" the word "vacant" is pronounced "vay-cunt" almost certainly so as to imply the use of the expletive.

accenting, addition or elision of syllables, distorted pronunciation, dynamic level, and so forth, with an associated system of notation and a matrix of associated meaning. However, even on a more basic level of analysis, such as the one that I have performed here, the embedded meanings in the vocal performance become apparent by studying the fields of association and allusion.

Although I would not go as far as to say that these elements replace the purely musical ones as conveyors of musical meaning, I would suggest strongly that they contribute vast amounts of meaning during the performance of the music. A very strong personal aspect is associated with the performance of this particular type of rock music - the performer wishes to make the song his or her own[79]. One could therefore derive that every performer would have a certain set of performative devices that characterise their style of singing or playing. These devices are strong communicators without which the performance would be lacking in any conviction. Another set of strong communicators is created by the appearance and overall visual impact of the artist/s during performances, as the following section explains.

4.2.3 Visual display and behaviour during performance

In the promotional video clip the band is seen on stage performing "God Save The Queen". However, it becomes apparent that the sound that is heard is not the result of the on-screen playing. It is very clear that Paul Cook plays different drum fills from the ones heard on the soundtrack. There are also instances where Sid Vicious does not appear to be playing at all, and at one point Cook gets up from his drum throne and throws his hands in the air, despite the drumming continuing on the soundtrack. There are instances where Rotten seems to have forgotten the lyrics or where he is drinking when he should be singing, and Steve Jones stops playing once to turn around and kick Paul Cook's drum kit. It is therefore quite clear that the video clip is not to be taken seriously as a live performance, but rather as showing the band's antics on stage, to

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[79] I am not denying the fact that performers of classical music also make their personal mark on their performances. However, in this case the conventions of concert etiquette and established performance practice have a far more extensive influence over the performance of pieces from the canonic concert repertoire, probably so as not to divert attention away from the music itself.

show that they are having fun being rock musicians, but that they are not trying to be rock superstars. They are not shown as very serious musicians and they are not shown as being adorned by screaming fans. The video almost seems to be saying that they have managed to make it in the music business without having to do too much. This attitude was after all pretty much what the Sex Pistols were about. They were trying to be anti-musicians, and they managed to make money from record companies without having to play much music for it.

Although the band is shown on stage in a performance venue, there is no audience. Therefore the only interaction is between the band members themselves, and between the band and the camera. Although there are some wide-angle shots, Rotten remains the focal point during much of the video clip. The camera follows him around on stage and his response is a mixture of being oblivious to the camera and singing right into the camera. For a while the camera follows Steve Jones, but he clearly shows that he is annoyed by this. He does not want to be the centre of attention. Rotten's performance to the camera is intense, especially in terms of his facial expression. His face is often contorted and his look is rather crazed and disturbed. This is the intensity that his performance conveys - that of an aggressive and insane young man (there is even a slight suggestion of a straight-jacket in the way that the oversized sleeves of his white shirt are longer than his arms and hang over his hands). However, he does not seem to be moving much. There is no jumping from him, and certainly no dancing at all. His feet are firmly planted for most of the performance, and he does not seem to be responding to the rhythmic element of the music at all. The only movement of the body is a sort of forward-leaning folding in half. Towards the end of the song he appears to be just hanging onto the microphone stand, not standing upright at all. Figure 4.2 is an illustrative series of screen grabs from the video clip.

5. CLOSE

The analysis of "God Save The Queen" has shown where the song is situated within the SCFS. It has also demonstrated the musical fabric of the song and, by dissecting that fabric, has shown how the ethos of inverted aesthetic finds its way into the song. Accordingly, the material is not expertly constructed and there does not seem to be a

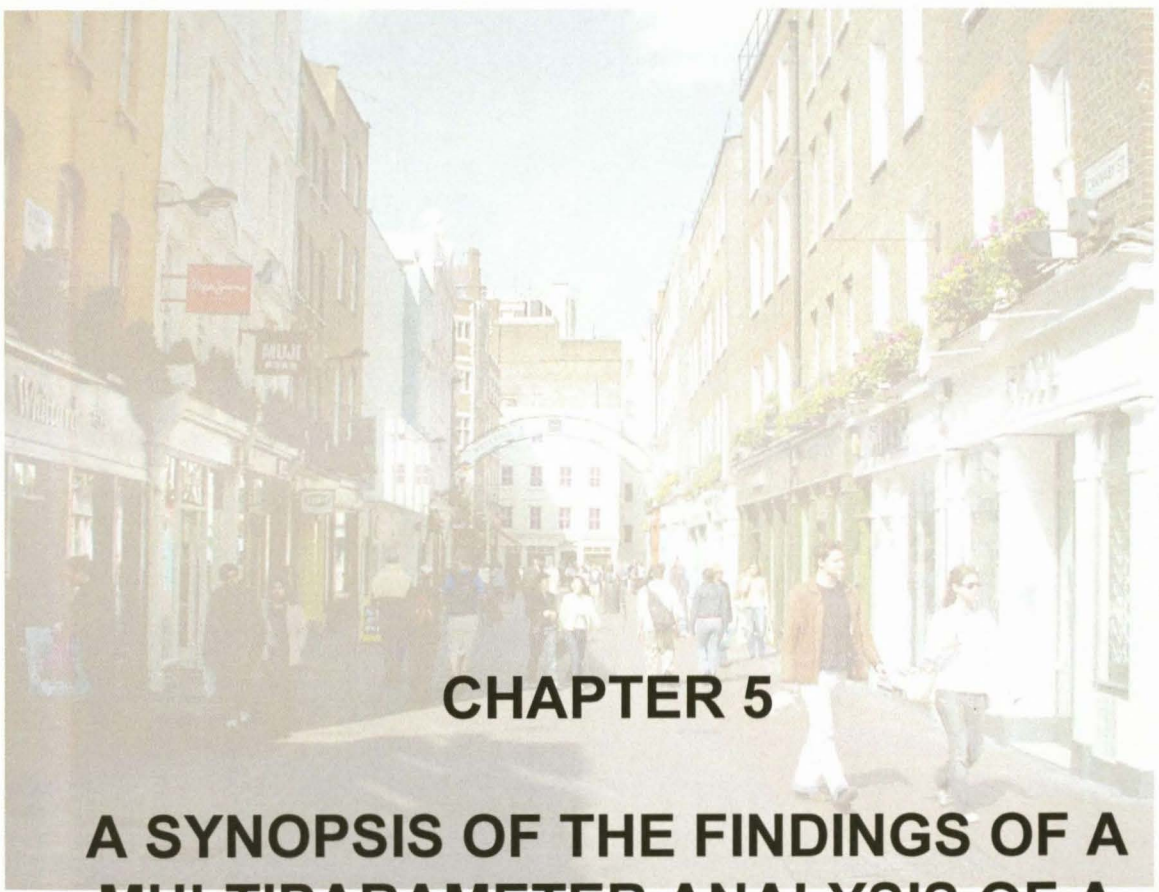
deep-lying logic in the way the song is made up from constituent parts. The instance of repetition of material is extremely high, which suggests that the amount of time spent in writing and recording the song was not very great.

However, in spite of this very limited musical vocabulary, the song is extremely effective as a means of communication. The appeal is extremely direct. The song seems to be not only an address from the Sex Pistols to the general public, but it is also a piece of work that represents the sentiments of the young working class. There is a sense of common interest between the emitter and the receiver (in this case, the punk fan, who empathises with Rotten), and a sense of alienation between Rotten and the non-punks. The song is obviously written for punks, but it is written about the general public and their dream-like existence.

The unpretentious nature of this song complements its message. Just as the celebration of the queen's jubilee had no similarity with the everyday life of the working class youth, the Sex Pistols believed that the popular music of the time had no grip on the reality of living in Britain in 1977. They did not produce sophisticated music with artistic pretence, not just because they were against that sort of music, but also because the reality of their situation was that they had not been trained as musicians, that they had very little musical knowledge and limited experience of song-writing. Their playing duplicated the same melody in the bass, guitar and vocals, not because they wanted to put extra emphasis on the melody, but because that was the only way they knew at the time. The fact that the song lacked counterpoint or a more interesting harmonic structure or texture did not occur to them, because those concepts were not within their field of reference when they wrote and recorded the song. The music is raw, but so was the emotion that went into its performance.

One of the greatest successes of this song, and one that cannot be ignored, was that it was absolutely parasitic in the way it reached the public. The Sex Pistols capitalised on all the promotion that was associated with the jubilee festivities. The higher the profile of the queen and the celebrations became, the higher the profile of the Sex Pistols and "God Save The Queen" became. The more people there were that took a part in the jubilee celebration, the more people there were that were outraged by the

Sex Pistols' iconoclasm. The Sex Pistols knew how to stir emotions, whether they were the emotions of a punk fraternity, or whether they were the moral outrage of the public. "God Save The Queen" became an alternative anthem and is arguably the most influential punk song ever released in Britain.



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CHAPTER 5

A SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS OF A MULTIPARAMETER ANALYSIS OF A SELECT REPERTOIRE OF PUNK ROCK

5

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was a demonstration of an analysis of just one song, without making reference to the rest of the twenty-six songs that have been selected for scrutiny in this thesis. In this chapter I shall discuss in general terms the findings of similar analyses performed on the remaining twenty-five songs, as well as "God Save The Queen". Obviously it would not be possible or even desirable to demonstrate these analyses here. In this chapter I would rather attempt to discuss some of the similarities, the differences, the salient features and the exceptional elements that have come to the fore during my analyses.

During the analytical process it was important not to have any preconceived ideas about the findings. Every song had to be considered without bias or expectation. It was also important to realise that the songs were the products of groups (bands) and individuals, and not a single composer or lyricist. Even though all the songs are regarded as punk songs, they were not seen as a conglomerate, but rather as individual artistic outputs.

It was therefore necessary to be flexible in the application of the analytical model so as not to expect to be able to arrive at the same number of valuable conclusions in all categories of analysis. Without wanting to make axiological judgements about songs, it was simply apparent from the start that some songs would yield a greater amount of significant material than others. Although the songs all come under the punk rubric, they represent a diverse body of music. Each song comes with its own history, its own circumstances, its own context and its own ownership.

As stated at the beginning of the analysis in Chapter 4 (p. 102) the sections regarding the Sociocultural Field, the Musical Channel and the Selection of the Method and Material (pp. 102 - 106) should also be read as an introduction to this chapter. The discussion below will take the order of discussion in the previous two chapters as a guide. A few additional points will also be made. In broad terms the discussion in this chapter will take place under the headings of 1. STYLE, SUB-CODE AND IDIOLECT, 2. STRUCTURE, and 3. TRANSMISSION.

1. STYLE, SUB-CODE AND IDIOLECT

The sociocultural field of study has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and briefly in Chapter 4. However, the analysis object should also be located in terms of its place within the Western musical *Langue*.

According to Richard Middleton's nine levels of code (Middleton 1990:174) the style of the body of work that I have identified to study here would be described as rock, and the sub-code as punk rock. This classification seems fairly unproblematic - the subject of study in this thesis is after all punk rock. However, rock music and its sub-code punk rock are more than just random names. These names are given to works of music that display a certain degree of commonality. In most cases this would not be a problem to acknowledge, as it is normally not difficult to see why the music of a certain performer may be described as rock or punk rock. Having said this, it also has to be acknowledged that musicians may produce music that may be very diverse indeed. As an example, ABBA may be referred to again. Although the music of this group is

described as pop, and ABBA as a pop group, they produced music in a large array of styles, including folk (e.g. "Hej Gamle Man"), rock-'n-roll (e.g. "So Long"), rock (e.g. "Watch Out!"), disco (e.g. "Summernight City"), musical theatre (e.g. "I'm A Marionette"), power ballad (e.g. "One Man, One Woman"), reggae (e.g. "Tropical Loveland") and synthesizer pop (e.g. "Under Attack"). In the same way, allowances have to be made within punk rock for the fact that, although many of the songs studied conform to certain basic stylistic criteria, there are some songs that borrow musical styles from elsewhere. So, for instance "Peaches" by The Stranglers has a very strong reggae element, while "Glad To Be Gay" by Tom Robinson Band is in the style of cabaret or musical theatre and "Hong Kong Garden" by Siouxsie and the Banshees sounds very much like pop. Furthermore, "Hersham Boys" by Sham 69 parodies American Country and Western saloon music, although not for the entire duration of the song.

It is therefore apparent that the definition of punk rock within rock and the more general realm of Western music is not always necessarily clearly defined. It has to be accepted that, at least to an extent, music is defined as being of a certain style *by association*. This is an unavoidable by-product of Western academic thinking that wishes to always be able to classify and categorise things in watertight compartments. Whenever this compartmentalisation fails, exceptions to the rule are made to accommodate phenomena within our frame of thought. The Stranglers cannot be punk rockers *and* reggae musicians at the same time. Therefore "Peaches" will be described as a punk song in a reggae style. This type of classification is a conundrum for which there does not exist a solution at present.

In addition to the stylistic exceptions referred to above, the body of music studied draws musical inspiration and influence from other styles of song, for instance football chants (e.g. "If The Kids Are United", "Hersham Boys" and "Hurry Up Harry", all by Sham 69), disco (e.g. "Death Disco" by Public Image Ltd) and rock-'n-roll (e.g. "2-4-6-8 Motorway" by Tom Robinson Band).

It has to be added too that each of the groups developed a rather individualistic style of performance, which would be described as an "idiolect" by Middleton (Ibid.). These

idiolects may be the result of certain techniques of performance that were favoured by particular musicians, recording techniques, singing styles, and so forth. These elements will be the topic of discussion for the remainder of this chapter.

2. STRUCTURE

The discussion of structure will be in terms of form-schematic sections, tonality, orchestration, time-related considerations, and lyrics.

2.1 Form-schematic considerations

In most of the songs studied there are clear sections of differently themed music that give form-schematic structure to the songs. There is also in most cases a degree of recurrence of material that normally lends a verse-and-refrain structure to the song. Out of the twenty-six songs there are only two where the sense of verse-and-refrain is largely or completely absent. In the case of "Death Disco" by Public Image Ltd there is just one bass riff that occurs throughout the song. Above this there are only three possible thematic lines: a five-note sung phrase, a mutant citation of the signature theme from Swan Lake by Tchaikovsky, of which there are two permutations, and another vocal line that seems to be loosely based on the first half of the Swan Lake theme. The way in which this song is stitched together from these bits of material seems very haphazard, and there does not seem to be a fixed pattern of occurrence or recurrence[80]. The other example of a largely irregular form-schematic structure is "Peaches" by The Stranglers. This song consists of two melodic patterns played by bass, guitar and organ. One pattern occurs as a riff throughout the song, while the singer talks over the backing provided by this riff. The other melodic line, which is just one bar long, occurs occasionally at the end of the narrative sections (verses, if they can be called that) with the line "Walking on the beaches looking at the peaches" sung

[80]It has to be noted here that the sounding object studied in this case was recorded live during a concert in Tokyo. The occurrence of vocal lines does not correspond with the order of lyrics that I sourced from the Internet. It may be that John Lydon was just improvising above the bass riff, using the written material in any configuration, in whichever order it occurred to him. However, the result is a loss of coherence, as it becomes impossible to predict the order of vocal lines in the song.

over the instrumental backing.

In the remaining twenty-four songs there are clearly demarcated thematic sections. These sections include instrumental introductions, instrumental interludes (*not solos*[81]), verses, bridges, refrains (choruses), instrumental solos and codas. In two of the songs, "If The Kids Are United" and "Hersham Boys", both by Sham 69, there is also a vocal solo interlude, which entails colloquial Cockney speech (e.g. "You all right guvnor? Yeah I'm all right" and "Come on now, you boys"). These vocal interludes contribute to the playfulness of the performance, and also help enhance the Cockney theme that Sham 69 so liked. The use of these types of thematic sections varies in the songs, so that some songs contain most types, while others contain only the introduction, verse and refrain. There is therefore not a very high level of consistency, but there seems to be an adherence to established practices.

2.2 Tonality

Punk's attitude toward tonality, and especially harmony, already has a reputation of infamy in terms of its supposed chordal economy - the title of David Laing's book on punk rock, *One Chord Wonders*, is adequate testimony to that. However, there does not seem to exist a comprehensive analysis of punk tonality that could confirm or refute this reputation. During my analysis of punk tonality I was therefore in relatively maiden territory.

2.2.1 Modality

As one would instinctively suspect or perhaps even expect, the majority of the twenty-six songs are composed within the realm of major/minor tonality. The only conceivable rationale behind this phenomenon is that major/minor tonality is the most familiar and most accessible tonal realm and would therefore occur naturally to untrained musicians

[81]A distinction has to be made here between instrumental interludes and instrumental solos. Instrumental interludes constitute sections where the vocalist is quiet, but where the instrumental backing does not feature any instrument prominently, or does not showcase any one instrument.

like the majority of punk rockers. However, major/minor tonality is not the only modal realm of choice. "Peaches" by The Stranglers uses only notes from the pentatonic scale $e^{\flat}$-$g^{\flat}$-$a^{\flat}$-$b^{\flat}$-$d^{\flat}$. "Five Minutes", also by The Stranglers appears to be in G Dorian, while "Germ Free Adolescents" by X-Ray Spex is in D Mixolydian. The Dorian and Mixolydian modes here are mainly the result of the occurrence of the flattened seventh in the scale. This will be discussed in more detail under 2.2.3 below. "Death Disco" is built entirely on an E Phrygian bass riff, although the $f^{\sharp}$ remains in the melody above this riff. These three modal examples demonstrate three different approaches to the establishment of the mode. In "Five Minutes" both the melody and supporting harmony confirm the Dorian mode. In "Germ Free Adolescents" the harmonic progressions suggest the Mixolydian mode, while the melody could occur in either D Major *or* D Mixolydian and is therefore ambiguous (there is neither a c, nor a $c^{\sharp}$ in the melody). Last, in "Death Disco" the implied modalities of the melody and supporting harmony contradict each other. These three examples were all authored by different songwriters, and it would therefore be risky and presumptuous to draw any definitive conclusions about what appears to be a naiveté with regards to modality. It would be equally foolish to imply any sophisticated modal consciousness, for instance a deliberate bitonality (or bimodality) in "Death Disco" or a calculated modal ambiguity in "Germ Free Adolescents". It appears that there is often a discontinuity between melody and harmony, in that they do not always appear to have been conceived together as a whole, but rather that harmonies are often merely chosen to support an already established melody, with little or no regard for traditional harmonic practices. More often than not the likelihood exists that the mode was coincidental to the melodic line and an unsophisticated approach to harmonising melody notes. This will be elaborated upon further under the next section, below.

2.2.2 Harmonic vocabulary

The most basic I-IV-V harmony is present, as for instance in the chorus of "If The Kids Are United", the verse of "Promises" by the Buzzcocks, and "Hurry Up Harry" by Sham 69. However, this is by no means true for all, or even most of the songs. Functional tonality is extended to include other diatonic chords: "Looking After No. 1" by the

Boomtown Rats is built on a staple of I, IV, V and vi, and "Promises" adds the mediant, so as to consist of I, IV, V, vi and iii, all in root position. There are occurrences of inversions like IV^6 in "God Save The Queen", IV^6 and V^6 in "2-4-6-8 Motorway" and $IV^{6/4}$ in "Five Minutes" by The Stranglers, but this is rare. "Hong Kong Garden" , however, is built entirely on just two first inversion chords[82], namely e:i^6 and d:i^6.

It would be possible to conclude after harmonic analyses of many of the songs that much punk rock actually has a relatively sophisticated harmonic vocabulary. "Gary Gilmore's Eyes" by The Adverts, for instance, contains a chord that might be figured as e:$_{\flat}$VII, and another, e:IV$^{\sharp}$. In a similar vein, one could find in "Ever Fallen In Love" by the Buzzcocks c$^{\sharp}$:$_{\flat}$VII, III and $_{\flat}$II. However, a *very strong* cautionary note must be made here. Upon closer inspection it will be apparent that *all* of the above chords are major chords in root position. Therefore, "Gary Gilmore's Eyes" contains the chords D:I and A:I, while "Ever Fallen In Love" contains B:I, E:I and D:I. The harmonic vocabulary is therefore not rich or sophisticated at all. In all probability the musicians involved in the making of this music will not have even thought that they were playing chords with tonic functions in particular keys - they will have identified harmonies as keys themselves, therefore not as D:I and A:I, but as D Maj. and A Maj. chords.

With the dominance of major chords now acknowledged, there is also a (much lower) instance of minor chords, but in these cases the majority of these minor chords are the true tonic chords of the songs. Examples here are e:i in "Gary Gilmore's Eyes", c$^{\sharp}$:i in "Ever Fallen In Love", e:i in "London Calling", a:i in "Like Clockwork", e:i^6 and d:i^6 in "Hong Kong Garden" and g:i in "Five Minutes". In all of these cases, except "Like Clockwork" the tonic minor chord is the *only* minor chord in the entire song (in "Like Clockwork" there is one other). There are a few instances where minor chords are used as harmonies other than the tonic, for instance A:vi and B:vi in "Looking After No. 1"[83], C:iii and vi in "Promises", E:ii and iii in "Do Anything You Wanna Do" and D:vi in "Top

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[82]The Orientalism of this song makes it very difficult for the Western ear to decide on just one tonal centre. Whenever the d minor chord is heard, the music seems to want to move toward e minor, and vice versa.

[83]This song is the only one out of the twenty-six that features the "truck driver's modulation". Therefore the first half of the song is in A major, while the second half and end are in B major.

Of The Pops".

With this overwhelming prevalence in many songs of the major chord in root position, it seems evident then that the type of tonality in much of the music is not traditional, functional tonality. That is to say that chords are not chosen for the function they have (tonic, subdominant, dominant). Instead, it seems that in many cases a chord is chosen because it is the only major chord that can harmonise a certain melody note. This is an example of how the melody dictates the harmonic progression, and also an example of how this practice destroys any possible notion of good voice-leading in the accompanying parts. It is therefore not unusual to see diatonically unrelated chords in close succession, for instance B:I-A:I-B:I-A:I-G:I-A:I-G:I-F♯:I as found in "Hersham Boys", B:I-A:I-G:I-F♯:I used as a modulatory passage in "Looking After No. 1" and the modulatory passage D:I-F:I-C:I-E♭:I-B♭:I-D:I-C:I, found in "Five Minutes".

2.2.3 Attitude towards the leading note and subtonic

Although it is my strong belief that harmonic poverty and a lack of skill play an important role in the choice of harmonies used, there seems to be a particular penchant for the flattened leading note, or subtonic, at the expense of having a proper (diatonic) leading note. This is found in "Germ Free Adolescents", where c-e-g leads to d-f♯-a, "No More Heroes", where f-a-c leads to g-b♭-d, "London Calling", where d-f♯-a leads to e-g-b, "Ever Fallen In Love", where b-d♯-f♯ leads to c♯-e-g♯ and "Gary Gilmore's Eyes", where d-f♯-a leads to e-g-b. The subtonic chord also appears in "Top Of The Pops" and "Hurry Up Harry", but in these cases not at the expense of the leading note, which resurfaces in both cases as part of the dominant harmony.

The harmonic vocabulary of the body of material is testimony to a non-adherence to standard practice and a lack of sophistication that may cause punk rock to pale in comparison to art music or the pop music of groups such as Pink Floyd, Queen and ABBA. There is also enough suggestion that much punk rock is harmonically more refined than most 1950s rock-'n-roll. However, whereas 1950s rock-'n-roll had a universal musical formula that was derived from the standard twelve bar blues pattern,

punk rock has no such set of harmonic conventions or patterns. Not one of the twenty-six songs studied has a twelve bar blues structure, and it would be difficult, if not impossible to narrow the diverse harmonic combinations of the songs down to any single language or pattern. This is not to say that punk rock ignores standardised tonic, dominant and subdominant harmonies deliberately or that it jettisons functional harmony on purpose - that would already imply a knowledge and understanding thereof. It is therefore not so much a case of ignoring the conventions as it is one of ignorance of them. Although there is a definite lack of harmonic innovation and skill in the majority of the songs, the "One Chord" moniker is hardly a fair representation of the selected repertoire. It would therefore be inaccurate to draw any cast-in-stone stylistic conclusions from Dave Laing's misleading choice of title. Punk rock may be characterised by harmonic economy, but my impression regarding this is that the real economy is not in terms of the actual number of harmonies that occur in the songs, but in terms of the types of chords used: major and (to a lesser extent) minor chords in root position represent the largest group of chord types by far. However, this, together with the prevalence of the subtonic in lieu of the leading note harmony, is not peculiar to only punk rock. Although harmonic use contributes towards defining a musical style, it is not the most pertinent stylistic element, but rather a manifestation of the general lack of musical skill, artistry and aspiration.

2.2.4 Melody

In the songs that I studied, the general attitude toward melody seems to be one that does not regard melody as the most important aspect of the song. That is why there are so many instances where melody is entirely absent from songs or sections of songs. The Sex Pistols certainly did not produce many memorable melodies, especially because of the type of singing from Johnny Rotten. John Lydon continued to perform in this style when he became the lead singer of Public Image Ltd. "Public Image" is extremely lacking in discernable melodies, while "Death Disco" features only one five note long melodic motif, as well as an approximate following of the ascending five note long figure from the Swan Lake theme. "Peaches" is largely spoken and therefore also lacks melodic material, apart from the occasional pentatonic downward line, and the

repeated bass riff.

In the remaining twenty songs, there is a large range in terms of the skilful construction of melodies, with the Boomtown Rats creating arguably the most sophisticated melodies, and definitely the melodies with the widest pitch range. "Top Of The Pops" by The Rezillos and "Glad To Be Gay" by Tom Robinson Band are also more ambitious melodically, while "Hong Kong Garden" is entirely built on a simple melodic pattern within the range of a perfect fourth (e - a), which is then transposed a tone down (d - g) and "Germ Free Adolescents" consists of an uncomplicated step-wise melody within a perfect fifth (d - a). The three Sham 69 songs draw very strong melodic inspiration from football chants, and are therefore relatively easy to sing, with "Hersham Boys" and "If The Kids Are United" falling within a perfect fifth and "Hurry Up Harry" within a major sixth.

Although most of the songs are structured clearly into melodically discrete verse and chorus sections, sometimes with bridge sections between them, there are songs where no traditional verse/chorus structure can be discerned. Examples are "Do Anything You Wanna Do", "Public Image", "Death Disco", "God Save The Queen", "Hong Kong Garden", "London Calling", "No More Heroes" and "Peaches". In certain instances the recurring material (what one would normally expect to form the chorus sections) is represented by just one single sentence or melodic line, instead of a chorus consisting of four or eight bars. It is therefore not always easy or possible to distinguish between a verse and chorus section based on melody, and one is often forced to look at the text or the patterns of recurrence for clues as to which sections are the choruses. However, these cases are exceptions and the rest of the repertoire follows established Tin Pan Alley conventions of verse and chorus.

There are some occurrences of secondary melodic material alongside the vocal melodies. However, these are mostly absent in the songs of the Sex Pistols, Sham 69, X-Ray Spex, The Adverts, The Clash, Public Image Ltd, Eddie And The Hot Rods, and The Rezillos. Therefore, the single most significant melodic instrument is the voice of the solo singer. The resultant melodies are normally dependent on the vocalist's ability

to sing and the songwriter's level of ambition for creating strong melodies. I consider it a strong probability that most of the melodies were created *after* the lyrics had been written, as the singing is mostly syllabic, rather literal interpretations of the rhythmic qualities of the text. This results in the most direct of musical communications. A more florid singing style would require a higher level of skill, would align punk rock more with mainstream popular music, and is probably avoided for this very reason. In the absence of strong melodic communicators, the transmission of meaning is transferred to the speech-like rhythmic qualities of the singing as well as other aspects of the vocal performance, such as the energy in the singing, and deliberate accenting. Instances of this latter device include cockney, mock-aristocratic, northern and Irish accents, but seldom American (an accent that was, and still is emulated in much British and other non-American popular music). The vocal melody in punk rock therefore normally assumes only a secondary signifying role.

2.3 Orchestration and texture

The most basic and most common band composition is that of vocalist with guitar, bass and drum kit. The number of guitars may vary from one to two, but in most cases (like The Clash, for instance) the guitar sounds of the two instruments cannot be distinguished from each other. The Sex Pistols never deviated from the most basic line-up and therefore remain the most basic of all the groups in terms of sonic make-up. On the other end of the scale, the Boomtown Rats had an instrumental ensemble consisting of vocals, backing vocals, guitar, bass, piano, saxophone, synthesizer, drum kit and finger snaps on "Rat Trap", and a similar line-up on "Like Clockwork", although the saxophone is omitted here, and a cowbell and a synthesized alarm clock sound are added to the texture. The most basic of the three Boomtown Rats songs featured is "Looking After No. 1", which consists of vocals, backing vocals, guitar, bass, drum kit and hand claps.

Between these extremes of the Sex Pistols and the Boomtown Rats there are various configurations of bands and the instruments they used. X-Ray Spex had the basic set-up, but whereas the band normally also featured the saxophone playing of Lora Logic

(on other songs like "Identity" and "O Bondage! Up Yours!"), "Germ Free Adolescents" features an instrumental sound that may be an attempt at a synthesized saxophone. In another use of a keyboard instrument, The Stranglers added an electric organ reminiscent of 1960s rock music to the instrumental line-up of "Peaches". The Oriental sound of "Hong Kong Garden" by Siouxsie and the Banshees is enhanced by the use of the (synthesized?) xylophone throughout the song and (synthesized?) tam-tam at the very end, in a typically Western appropriation of Orientalism.

One observation worth making here is that the sonic texture varies in some cases between a studio version and live version of songs. Unfortunately I was only able to compare studio and live versions of songs in a small portion of the material, but did find variances between them. As an example "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)" features harmonising backing vocals in the studio version, but no backing vocals at all, and thus a less dense texture, in the live version. In a reverse scenario Sham 69 have an added electric organ on the live version of "If The Kids Are United", while the studio version lacks this added instrument.

The findings in terms of orchestration and texture are rather surprising. Before I familiarised myself with the music as sounding objects, the only conception I had of punk rock orchestration was that of the basic Sex Pistols-like configuration. One conclusion that I can therefore make here is that I was either misled by literature regarding punk (normally accounts of performances), or that the live sets normally were far less complicated and less sophisticated than the recorded versions of the songs. In the case of the Boomtown Rats there certainly is an element of studio-engineering that would conceivably be difficult to replicate in a live performance, but whether this was indeed the case, is uncertain.

2.4 Temporal and durational considerations

Considerations of time and duration will be discussed in terms of song lengths, tempo, metre and rhythm, and the backbeat.

2.4.1 Duration of songs

The durations of songs are shown in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: DURATION OF SONGS

Title	Duration (Studio)	Duration (Live)
2-4-6-8 Motorway	3:22	
5 Minutes		3:37
All Around The World	2:59	
Death Disco		5:07
Do Anything You Wanna Do	4:02	
Ever Fallen In Love	2:40	2:36
Gary Gilmore's Eyes	2:20	2:41
Germ Free Adolescents	3:14	
Glad To Be Gay		4:47
God Save The Queen	3:17	
Hersham Boys	3:26	3:09
Holidays In The Sun		3:31
Hong Kong Garden	2:59	
Hurry Up Harry	3:06	
If The Kids Are United	3:47	3:37
Like Clockwork	3:45	
London Calling	3:24	3:28
Looking After No. 1	3:09	
No More Heroes		3:59
Peaches	4:04	3:55
Pretty Vacant	3:11	3:07
Promises	2:37	

Public Image	2:56	
Rat Trap	4:57	
Tommy Gun		2:57
Top Of The Pops	2:53	

Once again the format of dissemination would have been the seven inch single, which is partly responsible for the relative brevity of the tracks.

2.4.2 Tempo

The tempi of songs (in beats per minute) are shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: TEMPI OF SONGS (BPM)

Title	**Tempo (Studio)**	**Tempo (Live)**
2-4-6-8 Motorway	132	
5 Minutes		162
All Around The World	156	
Death Disco		138
Do Anything You Wanna Do	162	
Ever Fallen In Love	180	184
Gary Gilmore's Eyes[84]	138/162	132/174
Germ Free Adolescents	72	
Glad To Be Gay		120
God Save The Queen	150	
Hersham Boys	156	180
Holidays In The Sun[85]		144/156

[84]The intro to this song is slower than the rest of the song.

[85]The intro to this song is slower than the rest of the song.

Hong Kong Garden	156	
Hurry Up Harry	138	144
If The Kids Are United		
Like Clockwork	156	
London Calling	144	150
Looking After No. 1	192	
No More Heroes		168
Peaches	78	84
Pretty Vacant	150	151
Promises	174	
Public Image	162	
Rat Trap	144	
Tommy Gun		168
Top Of The Pops	198	

It is very clear from the above table that the majority of punk songs studied are played very fast. The only exceptions are "Peaches", with its reggae beat, "Glad To Be Gay", which is played as a melancholic, almost swinging sing-along type of song, and "Germ Free Adolescents" which is played as a 16-to-the-bar (16 semiquavers) rock ballad (and which is not similar to the rest of X-Ray Spex's *oeuvre*), "Death Disco" with its disco-like beat, and "2-4-6-8 Motorway" and "London Calling" with their conventional rock feel.

The speed at which the majority of these songs are played gives them a very intense energy. But tempo alone is not the reason why they feel so fast. Another contributing factor is the fact that the rhythm sections (guitar and bass) of so many of these groups play consistently in quavers. Interestingly, in all cases except one where both a live and studio recording were available for analysis, the live performance is faster (sometimes much faster) than the studio recording, indicating a more highly charged atmosphere during the performance.

2.4.3 Metre, phrasing and rhythm

The time signature of all the songs is 4/4. Most commonly the songs are constructed in phrases of four or eight bars. This is occasionally deviated from by the extension of a harmony at the end of a phrase (for instance at the end of the guitar solo in "God Save The Queen"), or when an additional bar is added to accommodate the lyrics, for instance in the verse sections of "Germ Free Adolescents". However, this is exceptional.

Rhythmically the material is relatively simple with nothing out of the ordinary. Normally there will only be irregular rhythmic detail in one of the voices at a time, while the rest of the voices or instruments maintain a sense of regularity and stability. Whenever this is not the case, it is not uncommon for more than one of the voices (for instance guitar and bass) to play the same rhythmic material, normally because they would duplicate each other's melodies. Rhythmic material, like melodic material is rather limited in most cases, and there is a high level of recurrence of material within in songs. Most commonly rhythms are additive, leaning towards longer notes at the end of rhythmic patterns and assuming the natural rhythmic qualities of the lyrics with very few melismatic lines. As stated previously, the rhythm sections most commonly keep the beat by playing unsyncopated, regular quavers.

2.4.4 The backbeat

The statement by Laing regarding punk's often unconventional approach to syncopation and the backbeat (Laing 1985:61, and pp. 83-84 of this thesis) seems to be applicable to a number of examples worth considering. In a break with the traditional approach to the backbeat, in "Germ Free Adolescents" the kick drum plays the first beat, as well as the divisions of the second and fourth beat, while the snare drum emphasises the third (*not* the conventional second and fourth) beat. In "5 Minutes" the drumming is of such a nature that the snare drum plays on all four beats in the bar, thus creating the rhythmic monad 1-1-1-1 instead of the dyad 1-2-1-2 associated with the emphasis of the backbeat.

In all the remaining twenty-four songs the backbeat is emphasised in the conventional way. However, there are sections of some of the songs where the playing deviates from this, but this is always just a temporary occurrence. Some sections of "Hong Kong Garden" have drumming cycles of two bars long, where the kick drum plays all eight beats (2 x 4), but the snare drum plays only on the second beat of the first bar. In "Hersham Boys" there are sections where the snare drum plays the rhythmic monad 1-1-1-1, and in "If The Kids Are United" the rhythmic monad appears for the entire chorus section (handclaps and snare drum on all beats), and the four bars just before the chorus (only kick drum playing on all beats). In the bridge sections of "Top Of The Pops" the snare drum plays the rhythmic monad, and in the introduction to "Holidays In The Sun" the kick drum plays all the beats without marking the backbeat[86].

Although the marking of the backbeat occurs traditionally for most of "Tommy Gun", "Rat Trap" and "Like Clockwork" these songs also break with tradition in certain sections, but they do so in a more sophisticated way than the examples discussed in the previous paragraph. In "Tommy Gun" there are sections where the drummer ceases the traditional marking of the backbeat, and plays a typical *Bolero* drumming pattern, consisting of crotchets and quaver triplets. In "Like Clockwork" the drummer substitutes his backbeat drumming for the rhythmic monad, played by the kick drum, while he plays in non-accentuated semiquavers, sometimes on the snare drum and sometimes on closed hi-hat cymbals. Relatively long sections of "Rat Trap" have no percussion at all, some sections feature just finger snaps on the second and fourth beats, while the "Billy, take a walk" section consists of just kick drum with snare drum rolls on the first and third beats. For a short section the drumming takes on the pattern of the 16-to-the-bar rock ballad.

Most importantly though, I am able to conclude that the deviation from the standard marking of the backbeat (as has been the practice since 1950s rock-'n-roll) is exceptional, and definitely not the norm. Herein lies one of punk's most crucial paradoxes: If indeed punk tried to break away from standard (mainstream) rock music,

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[86]On the studio recording (to which I did not have access) the kick drum is coupled with the sound of marching feet (Laing 1985:61).

then it was still inextricably bound by some of the most basic musical conventions of that very type of music. This demonstrates an inadequacy in terms of inventing a new musical style and structural makeup. Much of the meaning of the music is therefore assigned to the performative utterance. After Johnny Rotten left the Sex Pistols, Sid Vicious recorded a version of "My Way"[87], a song made famous by Frank Sinatra. Although the song is structurally similar to Sinatra's, Vicious's rendition is a most mocking and iconoclastic performance, which is also taken at a much faster tempo, with rock instrumentation and a rock backbeat. In a reversal of this process, the Fine Young Cannibals recorded a version of the Buzzcocks song "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)", which was again structurally similar, but played at a much slower tempo with milder pop instrumentation, and which was altogether lacking in the immediate and energetic appeal of the original. These examples support the notion that, although tempo is not the sole temporal conveyor of meaning, it is a very prominent one. It facilitated a punk-associated dance style and provided compensation for the general lack of syncopation and sophisticated rhythmic patterns.

2.5 Lyrics

Lyrics of songs were looked at in terms of subject matter, as well as the identities of the person making the utterance, and the addressee.

2.5.1 Lyric subject matter

For the classification of lyric subject matter, I referred to Dave Laing's classification in his discussion of punk songs from the first five punk albums of 1976/7 (Laing 1985:27). Statistically, the subject concerns of the twenty-six songs can be portrayed as follows:

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[87]At the end of the final concert of their American tour, Rotten decided to leave the band. McLaren and the other band members travelled to South America to team up with the train robber Ronald Biggs for the filming of *The Great Rock 'n Roll Swindle*. It was during this period that Vicious first recorded as a solo vocalist.

Table 5.3: BREAKDOWN OF SUBJECT CONCERNS OF PUNK SONGS[88]

Category	Number of songs	Percentage[89]
Romantic and sexual relationships	3	11.5 %
Sexuality	1	3.8 %
First person feelings	5	19.2 %
Social and political comment	14	53.8 %
Music and dancing	1	3.8 %
Second and third person	2	7.7 %
Novelty	0	0.0 %
Instrumental	0	0.0 %

Some elaboration is necessary here. "Glad To Be Gay" by Tom Robinson Band was classified as "social and political comment" and not "sexuality", especially as it deals with the police's unfair, and often violent, treatment and general harassment of gay men. The song in the category "sexuality" is "Peaches" by The Stranglers. Following Laing's explanation of this category, songs that feature here take lust, as opposed to love, as their subject matter. In the case of "Peaches" the lyrics deal with the intensely sexual feelings of a male seaside sunbather who walks up and down the beach, looking at scantily clad ladies, referring to them as "skirt" and mentioning "clitoris liberation". "Top Of The Pops" was classified as "social and political comment" and not "music and dancing", as it is about television consumerism, and the superficiality of the vacuous commercial pop industry, rather than pop music itself.

A further point that should be made here is that there are recurrent sub-themes such

[88]The songs were categorised as follows: Romantic and sexual relationships: "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)", "Like Clockwork", "Promises" ; Sexuality: "Peaches"; First person feelings: "5 Minutes", "Death Disco", "Do Anything You Wanna Do", "Gary Gilmore's Eyes", "Public Image"; Social and political comment: "All Around The World", "Germ Free Adolescents", "Glad To Be Gay", "God Save The Queen", "Hersham Boys", "Holidays In The Sun", "Hong Kong Garden", "If The Kids Are United", "London Calling", "Looking After No. 1", "Pretty Vacant", "Rat Trap", "Tommy Gun", "Top Of The Pops"; Music and dancing: "2-4-6-8 Motorway"; Second and third person: "Hurry Up Harry", "No More Heroes".

[89]Not rounded.

as violence and geographic location, that are not given their own explicit categories. The lyrics of "5 Minutes" deal with the vengeful personal feelings of someone whose wife was raped by men armed with knives. "Glad To Be Gay" mentions "queerbashers" and getting "beaten unconscious and left in the dark", while "Rat Trap" deals with subjects such as street fighting, domestic violence, teenage runaways that turn to prostitution, and alcohol abuse. In "No More Heroes" The Stranglers refer almost lightheartedly to the killing of Leon Trotsky with the words "He got an ice pick that made his ears burn". Another lighthearted reference to murder is made in the rather grotesquely comical song "Gary Gilmore's Eyes", which tells the macabre story of a man waking in hospital after receiving an eye transplant, only to find that the eyes of an executed serial killer were donated to him[90]. In "Death Disco" John Lydon (formerly Johnny Rotten from the Sex Pistols) takes an even closer step to death when he sings "Watched her slowly die / saw it in her eyes / choking on a bed / flowers rotting, dead". It is clear that the singing persona did not attempt to rescue the woman as she was dying, and there is a suggestion that he might be her murderer. The setting, a bedroom, may be the scene of romantic rejection and possibly even sexual violence. The only song that takes an explicit stand *against* violence (as opposed to for instance "Glad To Be Gay" that comments on it in an ironic way) is "Tommy Gun". The impact of this song is pronouncedly anti-military and anti-war, with lines like "We can watch you make it on the nine o'clock news / standing there in Palestine lighting the fuse", and "you'll be dead when your war is won / [...] but did you have to gun down everyone?". The song ends with the following stanza:

Boats and tanks and planes, it's your game
Kings and queens and generals learn your name
I see all the innocents, the human sacrifice
And if death comes so cheap,
Then the same goes for life!

However, this type of moral stand is by no means typical, but rather quite exceptional within the body of work that I analysed, which is why it receives a special mention here.

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[90]Gary Gilmore was an American serial killer who was executed by a firing squad in January 1977. He was the first person to receive the death penalty after its reinstatement in the USA.

The setting of a considerable number of the songs is urban and there are many references to the city. "Hong Kong Garden" describes a Chinese take-away restaurant in an industrialised urban landscape with "harmful elements in the air" and "polluted water", "London Calling" makes reference to an apocalyptic London and "Hersham Boys" mentions "council estates or tower blocks" in Hersham, Surrey being "so close to the city". "Rat Trap" goes even further to capture the constrictive, claustrophobic and regulatory nature of the city with lines such as "He says the traps have been sprung long before he was born / He says hope bites the dust behind all the closed doors", "There's screaming and crying in the high rise blocks / It's a rat trap Billy but you're already caught" as well as "In this town [...] everybody tells you what to do / in this town [...] everybody says you gotta follow rules" and "[The traffic light] tells you Walk don't walk, walk don't walk / talk don't talk, talk don't talk". Finally, Eddie and the Hot Rods sing that they "Gotta break out of this city / leave the people here behind" in "Do Anything You Wanna Do". It is rather ironic that, even though the city is described as a rather hostile environment, this is where punk was located and remained. The punk subculture was an urban creature, and it drew its very life force from the urban environment.

2.5.2 The emitter and addressee, *énonciation* and *énoncé*

David Laing's comparison between punk lyrics and the lyrics of main stream popular music was once again referred to and used as a model for this section of the discussion (refer to Laing 1985:63 - 73). He writes:

> Song as communication involves a sender and a receiver, one who addresses and one who is addressed. This process always occurs at two levels. There is an 'external' level where the performer (live or on record) addresses the audience (in the concert hall or beside the record-player or radio). There is also an 'internal' communication taking place within the lyric of the song, between the protagonist of the lyric and its addressee (Laing 1985:63).

He continues:

> Most popular songs ... do not have so unambiguous a gap between the external and internal levels of communication. Those two levels are distinguished in linguistic theory by the terms 'énonciation' and 'énoncé'. They distinguish the two aspects of any utterance: the act of uttering (énonciation) which corresponds to the external level or the performance of a song, and the thing uttered (énoncé) which corresponds to internal level of the statement made by the song lyric (Ibid.).

It is a common occurrence in popular music that the protagonist takes the form of a first person singular, referring to him- or herself as "I", thus being the narrator of the song, so to speak. If the actual performer identifies strongly with this narrator, in other words if his or her rendition is very convincing and engages strongly with the emotion (in other words, if the singer acts as *metteur*), the performance will be very direct and perceived as sincere. In the case of "Public Image", for instance, there is a very high level of isomorphism between the singer and the protagonist and the emotion of the *énonciation* and that of the *énoncé* becomes indistinguishable. In most of the songs that I studied, the protagonist is of the first person kind. The exceptions are "No More Heroes", where the protagonists are third person individuals like "Leon Trotsky", "Lenny" and "Shakespearoes", and "Rat Trap" where "Billy" and "Judy" are the protagonists. In "Hong Kong Garden" there is a confusion of protagonist identity, switching between first and second person (between "I" and "you"), while in "Germ Free Adolescents" and "5 Minutes" the protagonist is sometimes first person ("I/me") and sometimes third ("he/his", "she/her" and "they/them"). In cases where the protagonist is a third person, the vocalist's role in making the *énonciation* becomes rather separated from the content of the *énoncé*. The singer is not perceived as being "in" the song. This makes the impact of the song even more direct, because the singer's only address can now be to his/her audience.

With regards to the internal addressee of the song, that is in the *énoncé*, Laing distinguishes four types, namely Second person singular (lover, etc.), Second person singular (other), Second person plural (general) and Second person plural (specific) (Ibid.:68). Of the twenty-six songs, the internal addressees were as follows:

Table 5.4: TYPES OF INTERNAL ADDRESSEES

Addressee	**Number of songs**	**Percentage**[91]
2nd person singular (lover, etc.)	2	7.6 %
2nd person singular (other)	4	15.3 %
2nd person plural (general)	12	46.1 %
2nd person plural (specific)	3	11.5 %
Mixed / Various	5	19.2 %

The highest incidence by far is that of the 2nd person plural (general), which means that it would be easier for the actual listener, who is addressed by means of the *énonciation* to associate with the song, as they are not excluded from the address, as would be the case with "Hurry Up Harry", for instance. The five songs with mixed addressees are "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)" (2nd person singular [lover] / 2nd person plural [general]), "Germ Free Adolescents" (2nd person singular [lover] / 2nd person plural [general]), "God Save The Queen" (2nd person singular [other] / 2nd person plural [general]), "Hong Kong Garden" (2nd person singular [other] / 2nd person plural [specific] / 2nd person plural [general]), and "Peaches" (2nd person singular [other] / 2nd person plural [specific] / 2nd person plural [general]). In "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)", there is a very clever switch from the communication made to the lover, to the almost rhetorical question "Ever fallen in love with someone you shouldn't've fallen in love with?". This question is not put to the lover, but to the listener, thus involving him or her on a personal level. Most of the people listening to the music (whether they were punks or not) *will* have fallen in love with somebody they should not have (for whatever reason). This contributes to the success and appeal of this song, by requiring an acknowledgement and a response from a very broad spectrum of listeners.

[91] Not rounded.

3. TRANSMISSION

The transmission of the music will be discussed in terms of acoustic and electromusical aspects and vocal performance.

3.1 Acoustics, electromusical and mechanical aspects

In all instances of the Analysis Object the acoustic properties of the recording venue (studio or performance venue) are unknown. It is therefore not possible for me to provide informed commentary on the placement of recording microphones, the spatial organisation of the recording session and so forth. Furthermore, the technical aspects of the laying down of the sound are unknown, there is no information about the type of equipment used, the number of channels, who produced the recordings, how engineering was involved, or how many takes were spliced together to produce the final version of the song.

Because of these shortcomings, I am only able to perform a very basic analysis of the acoustic, electromusical and mechanical aspects of the analysis object. I *am* able to distinguish between extreme acoustic properties and can therefore at least comment on the audibility of the music, its individual parts, some basic sound qualities, and so forth.

3.1.1 Acoustic quality

In terms of the overall balance, the sonic "image" that was produced during the recording of the Boomtown Rats' songs seems to represent good recording practice, while the live recording of "Hersham Boys" represents the absolute worst. In the case of "Like Clockwork", "Looking After No. 1" and "Rat Trap" the audibility and discernability of all parts are of the highest level, while in the case of "Hersham Boys" the recording creates the impression that the (probably solitary) microphone was placed very far from the sound source, possibly not even in the same room. Therefore, even though this is evidently a very poor recording, it does not give any sort of representation of the actual

performance it attempted to capture. The dynamic level of the recording is very low, but from the quality of Jimmy Pursey's voice it is quite evident that the actual performance was delivered at a high dynamic level. The recording unfortunately fails to capture the full sound picture of the performance.

In the case of other live performance recordings, like those of the Sex Pistols at the Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas, the sound quality is not as good as it would have been in a studio recording, but the basic sonic picture is clear, so that the parts are discernable and captured to a much higher level of success than "Hersham Boys".

3.1.2 Electromusical and mechanical aspects

Punk rock existed in a time when the psychedelia of 1960s rock had largely gone out of fashion, and just before the start of the technology-obsessed 1980s. Disco music producers were already experimenting with electronics, while main stream pop was exploring the possibilities of the modern recording studio, mixing consoles and effects units. However, it has to be remembered that many of the punk bands were initially signed to small, independent record labels, with limited budgets, limited expertise, often archaic, second-hand equipment and therefore little capacity for producing records of outstanding technical and production standards.

Most of the songs that I analysed were produced without much electronic manipulation of the recorded sound. However, certain songs contain strong elements of electronic effects, while in others there are mere trace elements. In the case of "Hong Kong Garden", for example, the pitches of notes on the recording are about a quarter-tone out of tune with standard tuning, thus suggesting that the reel speed was altered in some way. In "Germ Free Adolescents" there is a high level of reverberation, especially on the accompanying arpeggiated guitar part. Other electronic treatments of sound include the overdubbing of vocals, found on "Hong Kong Garden", "Like Clockwork",

"Rat Trap" and "Top Of The Pops", as well as the electronic voice echo[92] of the line "There's gonna be a fight" from "Rat Trap".

By means of panning and foregrounding/backgrounding it is also possible to create an impression or illusion of three-dimensional space and depth. This can vary from, for instance, the slight foregrounding of the drums on "Pretty Vacant", to the severe backgrounding and right panning of the organ part on "2-4-6-8 Motorway". However, it is once again the Boomtown Rats recordings, in particular "Rat Trap" that seem to exhaust the possibilities of panning, filtering and extreme stereo effects. These recordings create the impression of a multi-layered three-dimensional soundscape that places the listener in the centre of the so-called "sound box". However, it must be pointed out that this practice is uncharacteristic of the rest of the songs, and should therefore be seen as an exception to the most common practice.

3.2 Vocal performance

In the previous chapter I already commented on Johnny Rotten's distinctive voice and manner of singing. Along with him, many of the punk singers cultivated highly personalised singing styles and voices, each with a trademark sound. Pete Shelley of The Buzzcocks, for instance had a mild Cockney, rather high-pitched, camp (though relatively reservedly so) voice with a quality of juvenile vulnerability. Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex had a working-class voice with virtually no vibrato, that she always pushed to its dynamic and pitch range limits (in other songs more so than in "Germ Free Adolescents"), while also suffering the misfortune of having to sing with the added difficulty associated with wearing intrusive dental braces. Jimmy Pursey of Sham 69 describes himself as a "country slag with a Bow bell voice", in the lyrics of "Hersham Boys". Reference is made here to the saying that, to be a true Cockney, one has to have been born within hearing distance of the Bow church bells (which are in Bow, near Whitechapel, Stepney, Limehouse, Hackney and Mile End in London's East End).

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[92]When compared to the end of The Clash's "London Calling", where the line "So alive" is echoed, there is a noticeable difference between the echo from "Rat Trap", which is generated electronically, and the echo from "London Calling" which is produced orally by Joe Strummer, by repeating and fading the utterance.

Pursey therefore prides himself in his Cockney parlance, and uses this to full effect in all of his songs.

One vocalist who is quite distinctively set apart from all the English singers is Bob Geldof of the Boomtown Rats. Not only did he sing with a very distinct Irish accent, but he also displayed a vocal agility that was unseen anywhere else in the other thirteen groups. Whereas singers such as Poly Styrene and Johnny Rotten sang with many falsetto or other swoops, Geldof was able to sing large intervals (for instance the downward octave in the chorus of "Like Clockwork") with considerable ease and accuracy, without having to sing a *glissando*. Because of his accomplished vocal technique, Geldof had the ability to apply his voice in a number of verbal and non-verbal acrobatic displays. This enhanced both the expressive and compellingly communicative nature of this singing.

There is a significant difference in approach between the raw, direct nature of the singing of Johnny Rotten and Jimmy Pursey, and Bob Geldof's singing that treats the voice as a virtuoso instrument. In the case of Rotten and Pursey, the communicative value of the voice takes prominence over everything else. The expressive nature of their utterance lies in the mundane character of their singing - there is no time or need for artistry. This directness is absent in the singing of Geldof, and a lot more energy goes into the craft of his singing.

Another distinction needs to be made here, between the largely poetic lyrics of Rotten and Geldof on one side, and the very literal lyrics of Pursey and The Stranglers. Whereas Sham 69 and The Stranglers produced songs with a rather low poetic value that are delivered in an ordinary, every-day singing style, the poetic lyrics of the Boomtown Rats and Sex Pistols were delivered in an ordinary style by Rotten, but in a more artistic way by Geldof. It seems then that The Clash and Siouxsie And The Banshees found a point midway between all of these. Both Joe Strummer and Siouxsie Sioux were reasonably accomplished singers (but not to the extent that Geldof was), and both of them produced lyrics of a reasonably high poetic value.

4. CLOSE

In addition to all the points of discussion above, there are other factors that would warrant closer inspection and evaluation. However, there are aspects of performance that simply cannot be analysed when only a recording of the live performance is available as analysis object. Aspects such as dynamic volume and spatial arrangement cannot be determined by merely listening to recordings of live performances. There are also other important features, such as the performer's interaction with the audience, the musicians' interaction with one another on stage, the body posture, physical energy of the performance, gesture, and so forth that cannot be scrutinised after listening to a live recording.

Another point worth making is that the analyses in this chapter do not account for inconsistencies in performance, for instance fluctuations in the level of performance standard[93], or on-the-spur-of-the-moment changes to lyrics[94], personnel changes from song to song or from recording to recording, technical aspects like re-mixing of the original recordings, the acoustic properties and capabilities of the playback equipment, and so forth. These examples do exist though, but this may be the topic of another

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[93]In the live recording of "Hersham Boys" Jimmy Pursey seems to lose his way and does not appear to be singing *with the band* at all times. When the band arrives at the first chorus, Jimmy is already one bar ahead, but does not realise this immediately, resulting in clashing vocal elements from himself and the vocal backing of the band. In another example, Joe Strummer of The Clash gets the order of lyrics wrong on a live recording of "London Calling", but this does not effect the *musical* flow of the songs, as the material exchanged by him are rhythmically and melodically interchangeable. On the same recording Strummer's voice is very coarse and his throat hoarse, and he has difficulty getting all the words out. Consequently there are sections of the song where only the secondary melodic material from the backing vocals can be heard over the instrumental backing. In the case of the Longhorn Ballroom performances by the Sex Pistols, Sid Vicious was under the influence of alcohol and narcotics and his playing is very erratic. Following the incident where he was head-butted by a member of the audience, Sid sometimes pauses his playing to wipe the blood from his face, resulting in a lack of the bass part for sections of the songs. During the entire performance Sid also falls over about five times.

[94]During the live Longhorn Ballroom performance of "Anarchy In The UK" (which was not one of the twenty-six selected songs), Johnny Rotten changes the vocals to "Anarchy in the USA" and "Anarchy in the US of A", to ensure a greater appeal to this American audience. In another example, during a live performance of "Peaches" in London's Battersea Park, the vocalist from The Stranglers changes the lyric "I could think of worse places to be - I could be down in a sewer", to "I could think of worse places to be - I could be in London, where I need permission for an afternoon", by which he probably makes reference to the licensing requirements associated with holding a day-time concert that featured loud music and public nudity (strippers) in a public open space.

discourse elsewhere.

As with all popular music, punk rock is surrounded by non-musical material that makes out part of its communication to its audience. However, as it was my intention to concentrate on the musical aspect of the twenty-six songs chosen for this chapter, I did not consider products and utterances such as single picture sleeves, promotional flyers, spoken sections on recordings, visual display, sartorial aspects, and so on. Although the meaning conveyed by these things may contribute significantly to the semiological impact of the live performance, I did not discuss them here, as I did not have an equal degree of access to live and visual material. In the Postscript I shall make more conclusive comments on the findings of this chapter.

Union Flags on Regent Street, London
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POSTSCRIPT

PS

Before I commenced my study of the twenty-six songs in the previous two chapters, I consulted many literary sources with recollections of punk performances from the late 1970s. Many of these sources are quoted in the very first chapter of this thesis. It became apparent to me that there is great sense of historic, geographic and cultural distance between me and the analysis object. I then reduced the geographical distance by relocating to London, in the United Kingdom. During my (almost two year) stay in London, I also had the opportunity to try and learn more about the culture by becoming a participant observer. Many of the social issues described in the first chapter of this thesis are still present in Britain today, albeit in other guises. In spite of the trend towards a more cosmopolitan society, there is still a relative sense of segregation in the multicultural society that London is home to. Events like the 7th July 2005 terrorist attacks on London's public transport system deepen rifts in the community, especially between the Asian Muslim community and the rest of London's inhabitants. Furthermore, the demographic face of London and South East England has changed dramatically since the late 1970s. Europe and the United Kingdom have opened up to much of Eastern Europe and there is a new influx of immigrants from countries such as Poland, Hungary and Slovakia.

However, my observation of and insight into the British urban culture notwithstanding, I am still faced with the insurmountable problem of the historic distance between myself and a subculture that has all but disappeared. Any analysis of punk rock that will want to make performance analysis its mainstay will face this dilemma. The subculture has been dead for many years, the music is not *made* any more and the people have all since moved on in life. It could be argued that the same would apply to a study of Viennese waltz music from the eighteenth century, but I do not think that a sensible comparison could be made. Because punk rock relied so heavily on the live performance and the culture of the street, the fact that it has disappeared in the live form does pose a serious problem, and one for which I do not have an answer. The study of the substitute for the real thing, namely the study of recorded material, brings me te a number of general conclusions, which I shall discuss in brief below as a closing section to this thesis. They are:

- Existing literature gives only a one-sided and limited account of punk rock;
- Recordings do not make suitable substitutes for the study of punk rock;
- Punk is much more diverse than we are led to believe; and
- The body of material studied should by no means be seen as representative of punk rock in its entirety.

Literature that concentrates only on a certain brand or strand of punk rock, for instance Jon Savage's *England's Dreaming*, makes a warped representation of punk rock as a whole. Authors often assume that they have the advantage because "they were there", but this often means that their accounts of the First Wave still rely on twenty-five year old personal recollections, and accuracy is not necessarily guaranteed. In order to try and experience the music for oneself, one has to refer to recordings of punk rock from the 1970s. Recordings of live performances are relatively scarce, and, as I have learned, there can be significant differences between the sonic qualities and the ethos of the live performance and the studio recording.

The problem with punk rock and recording is double-pronged: first, because punk rock attempted to make a stand against the commercialisation and watering down of popular

music, and second, because punk relied heavily on the immediate impact of the live performance. Therefore, any attempt to expose the true nature or the true meaning of punk rock by studying records, is doomed from the outset. Studying records will aid our understanding of how punk songs were written, how they were constructed, what the building blocks were, and how successful punk rockers were in using those blocks. Studying records will *not* aid our understanding of punk rock at the moment where its ideas become sounds.

The idea that we can formulate a master recipe for the making of punk rock is also ultimately flawed. By studying just a small selection of songs I have already been able to show that there is great variety in terms of the skill of song-writing, the competence of performance, the attitudes towards message and communication, and so forth. It may be true that there are many similarities between certain groups and certain songs, but it has to be accepted also that there are just as many exceptions. Although many punk rockers and many punk songs attempted to deconstruct the sound of rock and rock-'n-roll music, many others simply tied in with existing rock music practices and produced songs that were not so different in sound, or in attitude after all. There is not a single invention in terms of song-writing and song construction that can be attributed to punk rock. The raw material of punk rock was uncompromisingly conventional. It was the message that attempted to be new.

Just as I disapprove of any attempt to write a meta-narrative for punk rock, I would disapprove of anybody reading this thesis as an all-encompassing description of punk rock. That it certainly is not. This thesis has made certain findings based on the study of a small and very select repertoire of punk rock, and the selection process itself poses the same problems of punk and commercialism. It was not possible in this thesis to devise a model for analysis that can be applied with the same level of success in every instance and to every type of music in the world. However, if the analyst accepts his or her limitations, the application of the multiparameter analytical method will succeed in providing a broad description of analysis objects, which makes them more manageable and easier to comprehend and compare.

The fleeting nature of punk rock's so-called First Wave has been the topic of many discussions. Despite the various attempts to revive or even re-live punk rock (think of the so-called Second Wave and Hardcore in the 1980s and the Riot Grrrl phenomenon in the 1990s), the First Wave of British punk really ended just as the 1980s started. In Chapter 1 I suggested various reasons for punk's abrupt end, like the new brand of conservatism and patriotism that came into swing with Thatcher, the death of Sid Vicious, a general lack of philosophical agenda and an inability to plan, the end of the decade, the disintegration of the Sex Pistols, and so on. However, looking for *musical* reasons for punk's running out of steam is an altogether trickier task and a matter about which no absolute conclusions can be drawn.

The1980s did not bring an end to only punk rock. The much more mainstream, universal and racially inclusive disco music of the late 1970s also petered out at the end of the decade. That is, the particular musical sound of disco music was assigned to the 1970s, while the sound of dance music of the 1980s was more electronic, as the development of technology speeded up. Technical sophistication became not only an aspect of the music of the 1980s, but an aim, and much of the decade would be spent developing and demonstrating technological gadgets, stereo effects, synthesising, vocal manipulation and so forth. However, the social function of disco music stayed intact and therefore disco music was merely superseded by electro-pop and later forms like house, techno, rave and so on. In the case of punk, the obsession with technology that came with the 1980s would have defeated its insistence on the most basic and primitive recording conventions in any case, had punk survived beyond the 1970s. Musically speaking, punk was out of touch with the times, but unlike disco music, there was no immediate successor for its social function. The protesting aspect of punk was largely assumed by the nascent rap and hip-hop movements of the 1980s and 1990s, both of which were decidedly American. There was just no way that British punk rock could tie in with what was predominantly an African American cultural upheaval. Many of the celebrated punk rockers from the First Wave decided to embrace the technological advancement of the 1980s instead and started conforming to the new sounds of New Wave and New Romantic music. The look and the fashion were as gargantuan as they had been during punk, but now became a marketing tool of the MTV era of pop music

video. Figures like Adam Ant, Boy George and Billy Idol enjoyed considerable success as new romantic and new wave pop and rock stars, whereas Johnny Rotten simply faded and disappeared. The Clash and Siouxsie And The Banshees continued to build on their success from the 1970s, but again in both cases this required a change in the musical sound.

It seems then that the path to self-destruction for punk rock was that of maturation. For the three to four years that the First Wave lasted, there was no sign of the music changing. Instead, it was stuck in a static position with no scope for artistic development. The lack of skill and the general unpolished sound that were novel in 1976 had checked the evolution of the music, so that by 1979 punk, which had initially emerged partially out of boredom, ultimately grew tired of itself and its lack of direction. If the inverted aesthetic principle can be accepted as a given (and my feeling is that it can) then punk suffocated itself with its resistence to musical aspiration. Within punk itself there was nowhere it could develop to. Those musicians who were capable of performing at a higher level (and those who had already done so as punk musicians, for example the Boomtown Rats) adjusted their sound in keeping with the times, whereas those who were not capable disappeared from the music scene altogether or continued playing the same songs to occasional die-hard fans as if they were museum pieces from another era. Punk rock must therefore be seen as a quick burst of energy that seemed to offer a new alternative, but which, because of its own inability to renew, could not be sustained. Therefore, apart from the obvious cultural and political reasons for punk's demise, and the fact that people grow older and undergo changes in their taste in music and fashion, the ultimate reason for punk rock's lack of longevity was that the music had no obvious way to evolve. Punk's brevity notwithstanding, its influence as a cultural and musical force is still felt today. Punk's footprint beyond 1979, the quarter century that is commonly referred to as the *post-punk* era, has been the topic of works by numerous authors, most notably in Gina Arnold's *Kiss This: Punk In The Present Tense* and Greil Marcus's *In The Fascist Bathroom: Punk In Pop Music 1977 - 1992.* Punk's musical attitude resonates in the music of a plethora of present-day punk bands, not only in Britain and the USA, but in countries as geographically dispersed as Brazil, Russia, Australia and South Africa.

Graphic Material

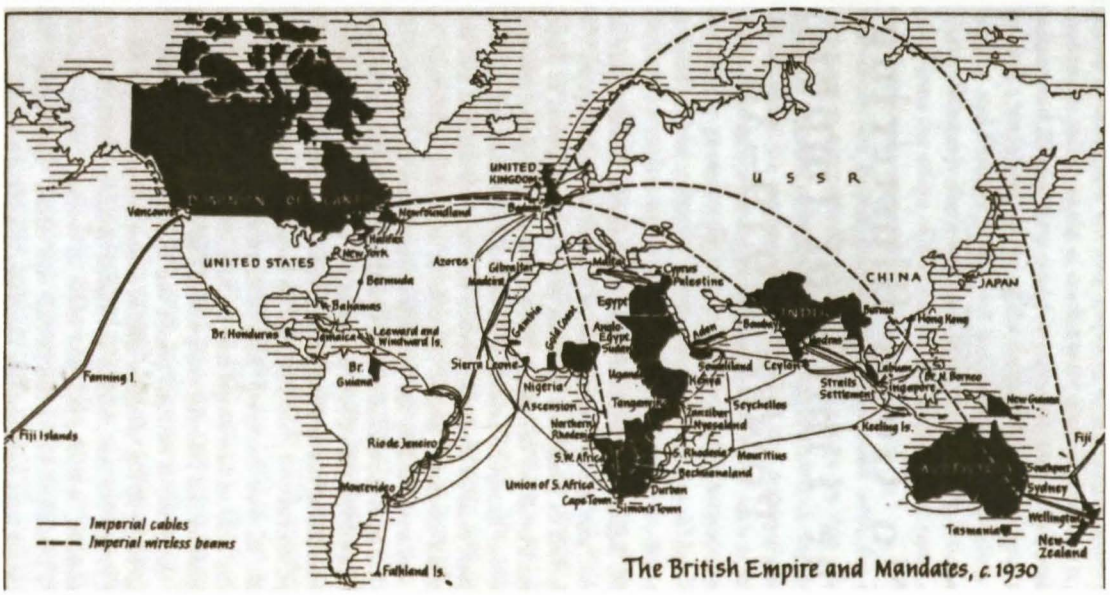


Figure 1.1 The British Empire before World War II.

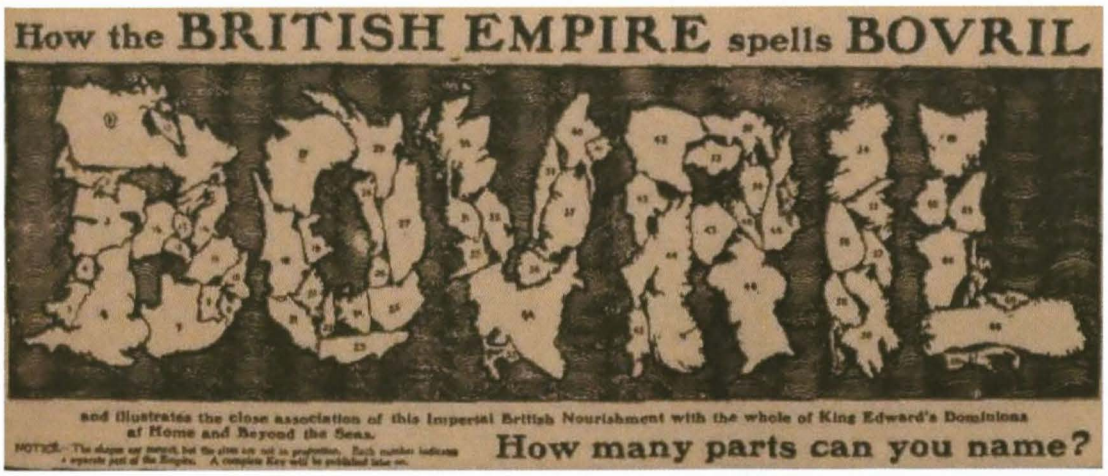


Figure 1.2 "How the British Empire spells Bovril and illustrates the close association of this Imperial British Nourishment with the whole of King Edward's Dominions at Home and Beyond the Seas." Promotional artwork in an unknown Cape Town newspaper. After the war the empire would gradually spell disaster, debt and humiliation.

Figure 1.3 London and its overspill into New Towns and cities, circa 1958.

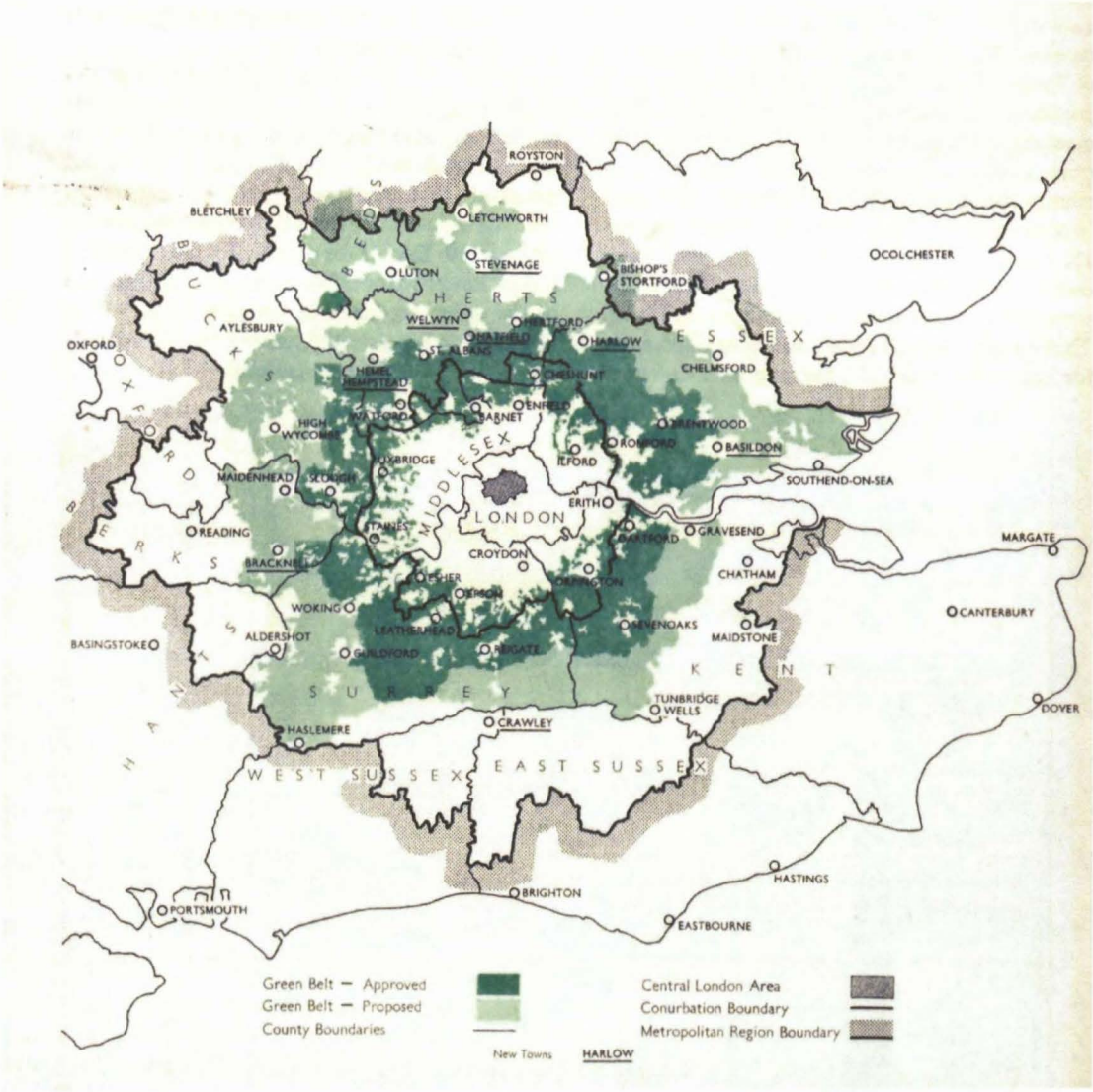


Figure 1.4 The approved and proposed sectors of the green belt around London. New Towns are underlined.

Figure 1.5 Cover of the first issue of *Punk* fanzine, January 1976.

Figure 1.6 The birthplace of British Punk: Vivienne Westwood's shop, "World's End" is still located at 430 King's Road (photographed by the author in September 2004).

Figure 1.7 Print on McLaren and Westwood's Cowboy T-shirt. The design was also available in red on green.

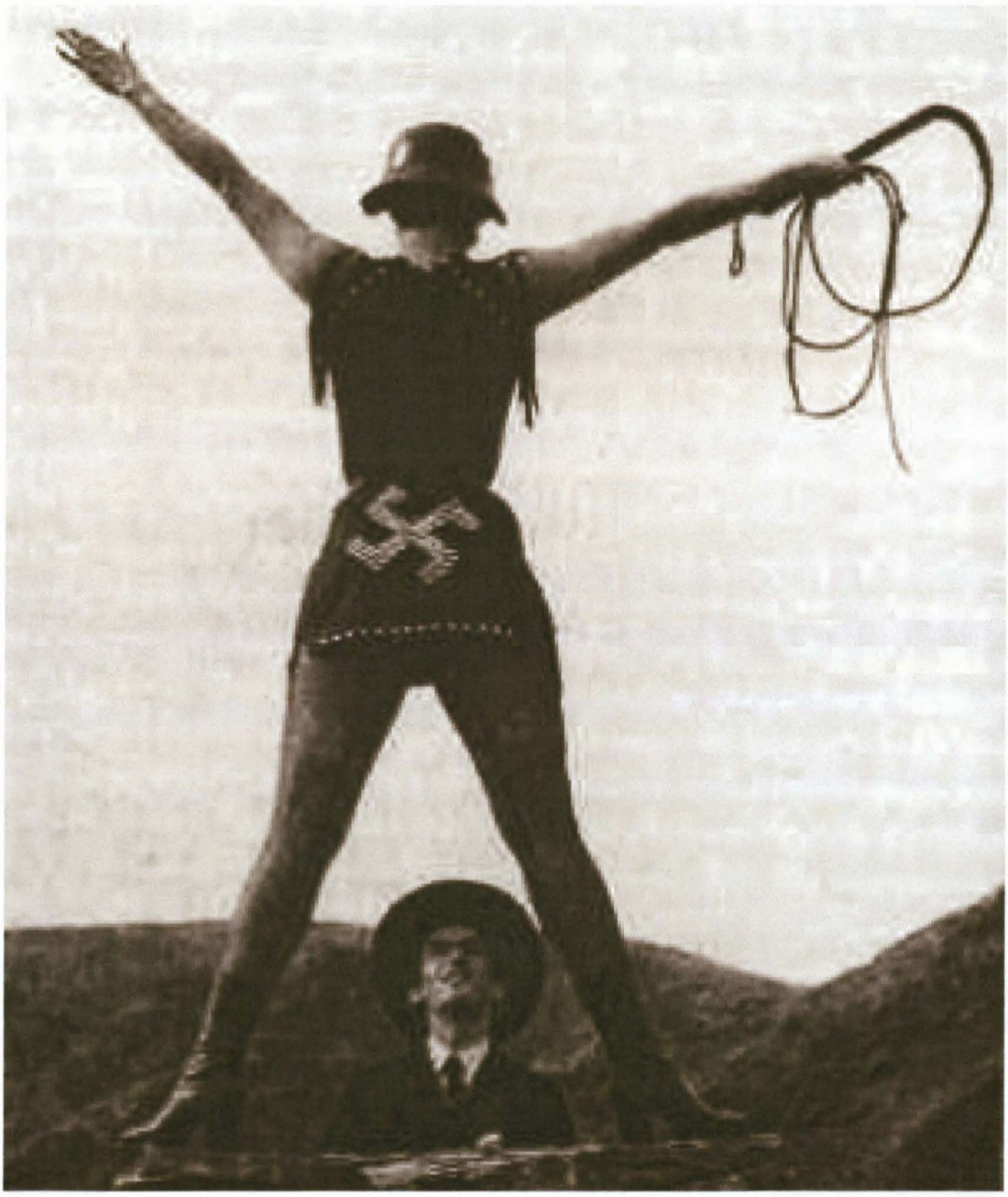


Figure 1.8 Fetish gear from McLaren and Westwood's line "Too Fast To Live, Too Young To Die".

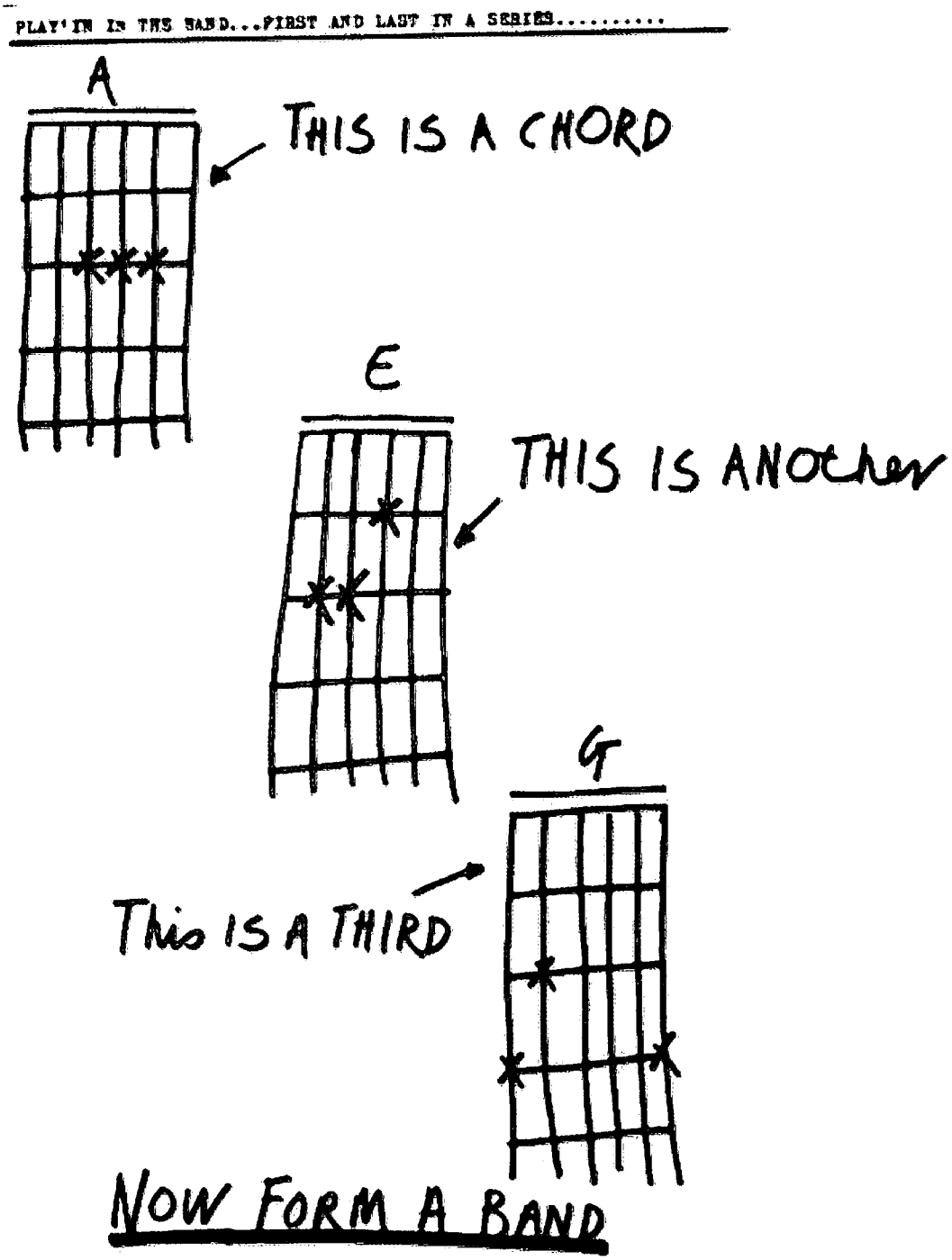


Figure 1.9 "PLAY'IN IN THE BAND...FIRST AND LAST IN A SERIES....." from an uncertain punk fanzine (*Sniffin' Glue* or *Sideburns*).

Figure 1.10 Numbers 6 and 8 Denmark Street, where the Sex Pistols had their first rehearsal space (photographed by the Author in September 2004).

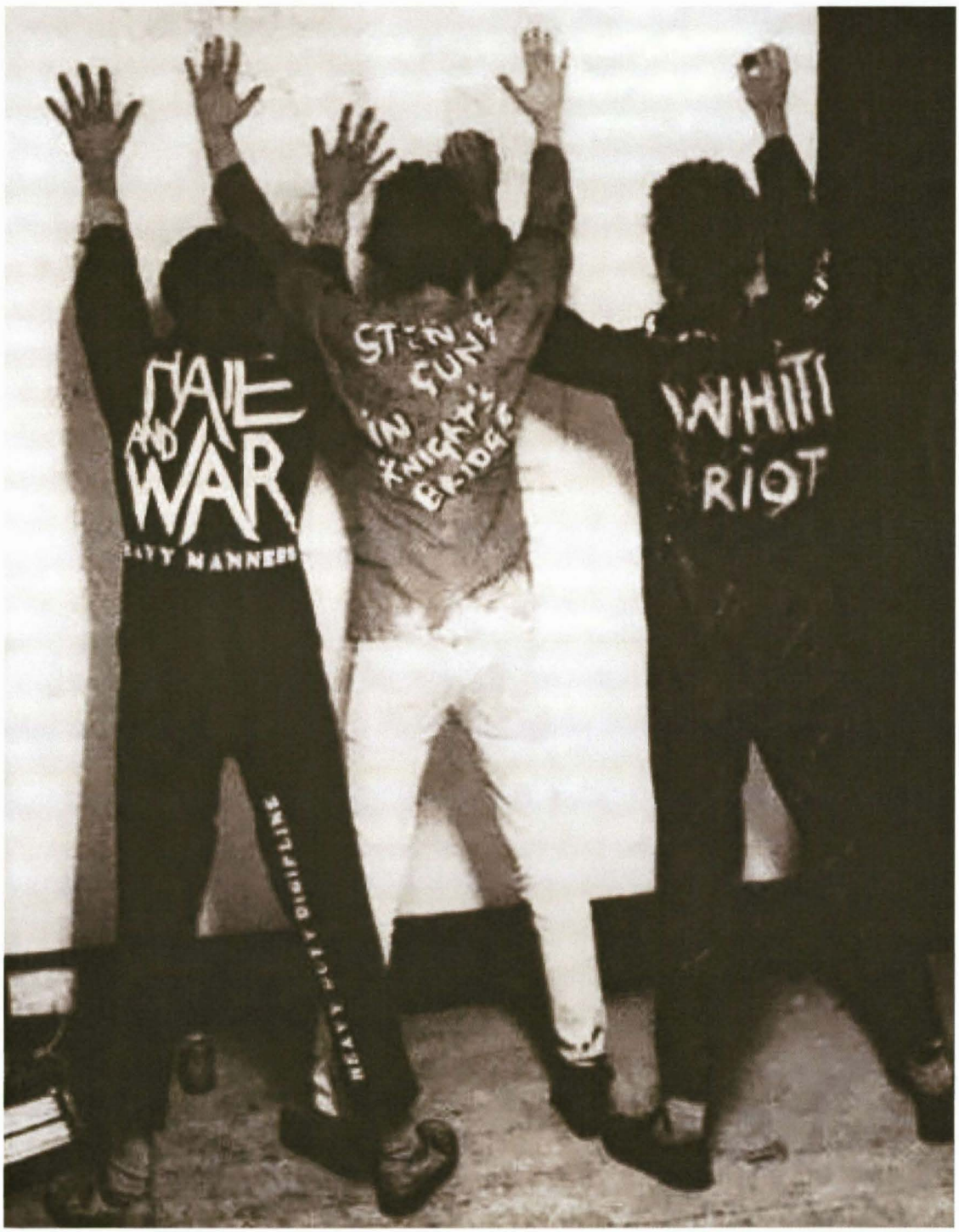


Figure 1.11 The Clash displaying their Situationist attire: "Hate And War", "Heavy Duty Discipline", "Heavy Manners", "Sten Guns In Knightsbridge" and "White Riot" - late 1976.

Figure 1.12 "Anarchy" flag designed and made by Jamie Reid as promotional material for the single "Anarchy In The UK", November 1976.

Figure 1.13 Reverse side of the sleeve designed by Jamie Reid for the single "Pretty Vacant", 1977.

Figure 1.14 Promotional artwork by Jamie Reid for the single "God Save The Queen", 1977.

Figure 1.15 Promotional artwork by Jamie Reid for the single "Holidays In The Sun", 1977.

Policies for winning back our country

- Stop all immigration and start phased repatriation
- Get Britain out of the Common Market
- Restore our links with the White Commonwealth
- Root out corruption. Restore honest government
- Encourage free enterprise that serves the national interest
- Combat unemployment by buying British
- Create genuine incentives to work hard and invest in our country
- Modernise our trade unions; crack down on union extremists
- Get tough with criminals. Bring back Capital Punishment
- Put National Defence before Foreign Aid
- Welfare: Put our old folk before aliens

A message from SQUADRON LEADER JOHN HARRISON-BROADLEY DFC (RAF Retd.), President of the National Front

"Don't be frightened by the lies of people who tell you we are 'Nazis'. The people who tell that lie are the people who are murdering our country. Millions of people support our patriotic policies, yet our opponents try to pretend that to support them is to be a 'Nazi'.

"Let's have an end to this nonsense. We're British. We're against dictatorship; we support parliamentary democracy and individual freedom. We're a party of the present – and the future.

"The 'Nazi' talk is just a pack of lies cooked up by Labour politicians terrified of losing their votes. The idea is to stop you exercising your own independent judgement of NF policies. Find out more about us for yourself by filling in the form below and we'll send you information about all the policies on which we're fighting this election."

To: The Secretary, National Front,
73 Great Eastern Street, London E.C.2.
Please send me details about National Front election policy.
Name
Address

It's OUR country... let's win it back!

Vote National Front

Figure 1.16 National Front leaflet for the 1979 General Election, Ilford, Essex.

Figure 1.17 Sex Pistols logo by Jamie Reid. The random lettering became standardised in this form for nearly all Sex Pistols promotional items.

Figure 1.18 ABBA's logo is a registered trade mark.

Figure 1.19 The Sex Pistols posing for a publicity photo. Steve Jones is second from the left; Paul Cook is on the extreme right.

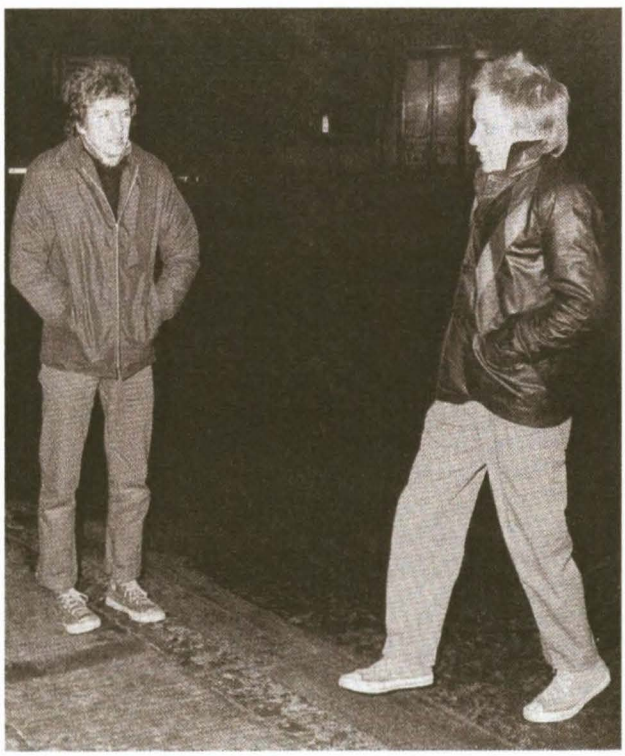


Figure 1.20 Steve Jones (left) and Paul Cook in regular attire. They only agreed to have the photo taken if it was not for publication purposes.

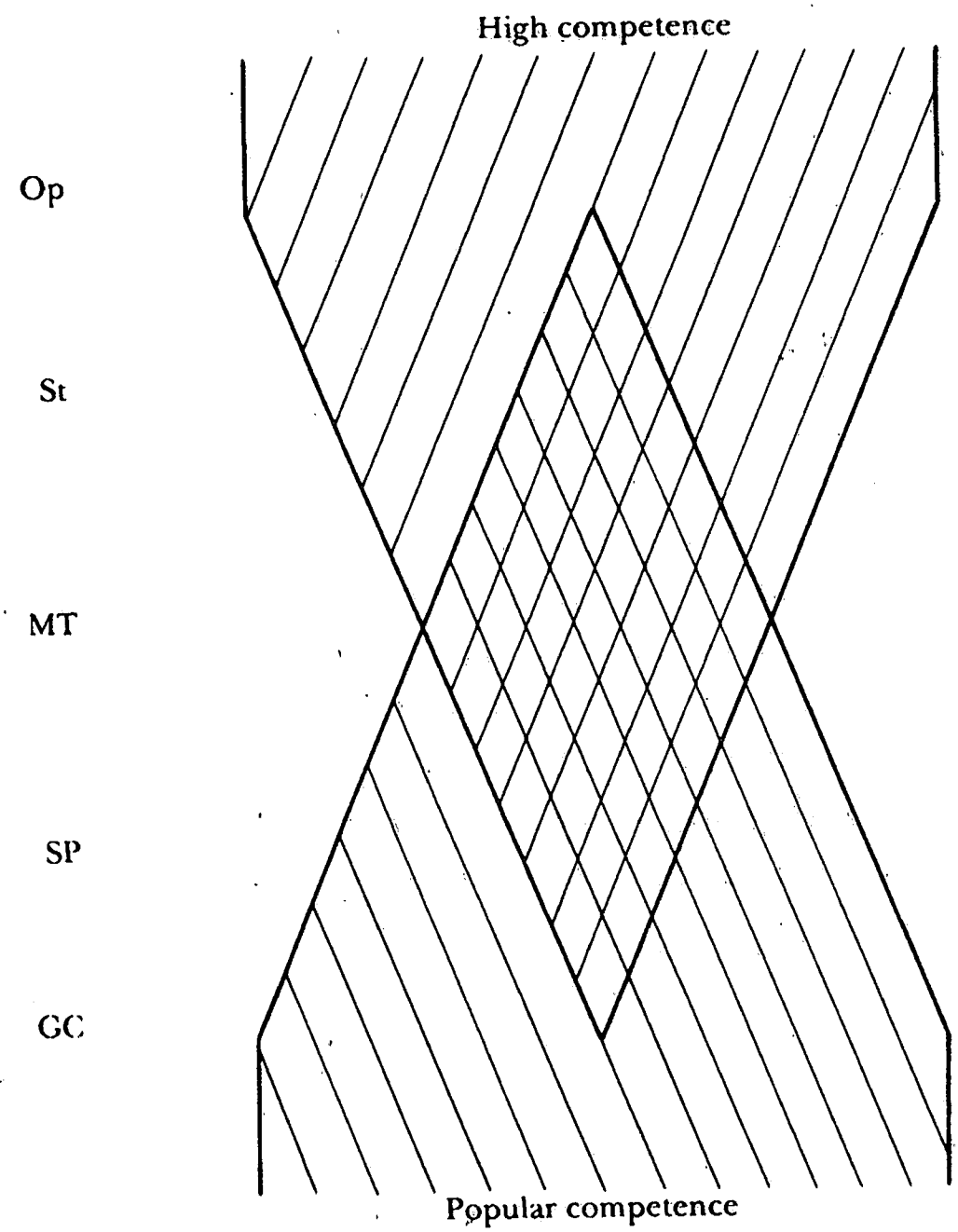


Figure 2.1 Stefani's hierarchy of musical code, depicting high, common and popular competence.

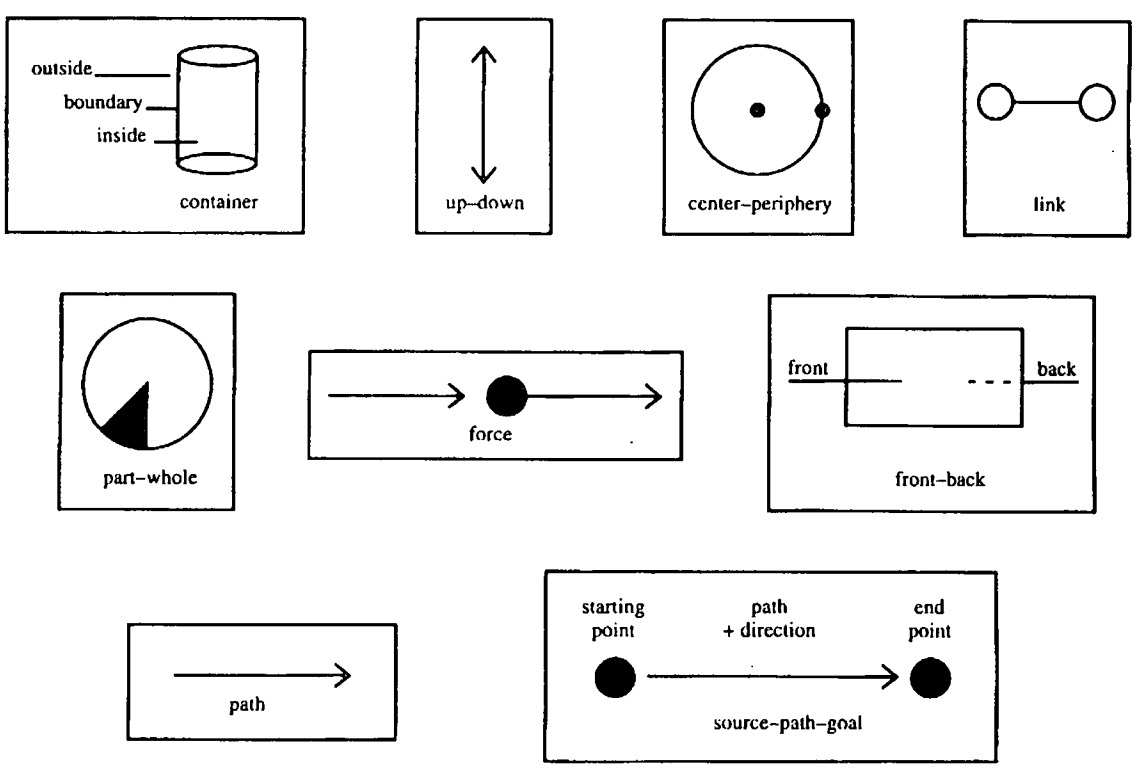


Figure 2.2 Saslaw's two-dimentional graphic depictions of some of the Image Schemata frequently used in analysis.

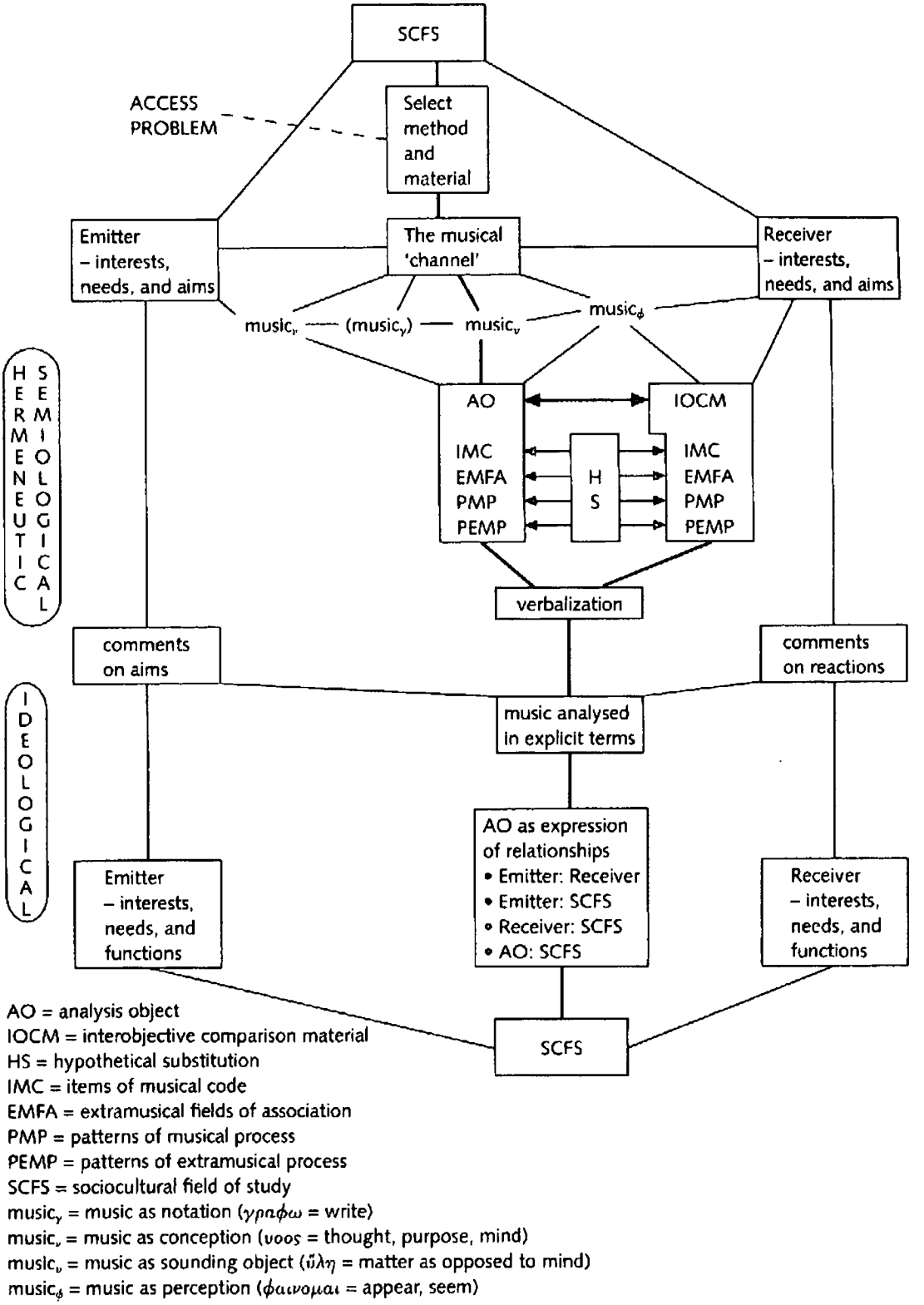


Figure 2.3 Philip Tagg's model of the "methodological paradigm for analysis of affect in popular music".

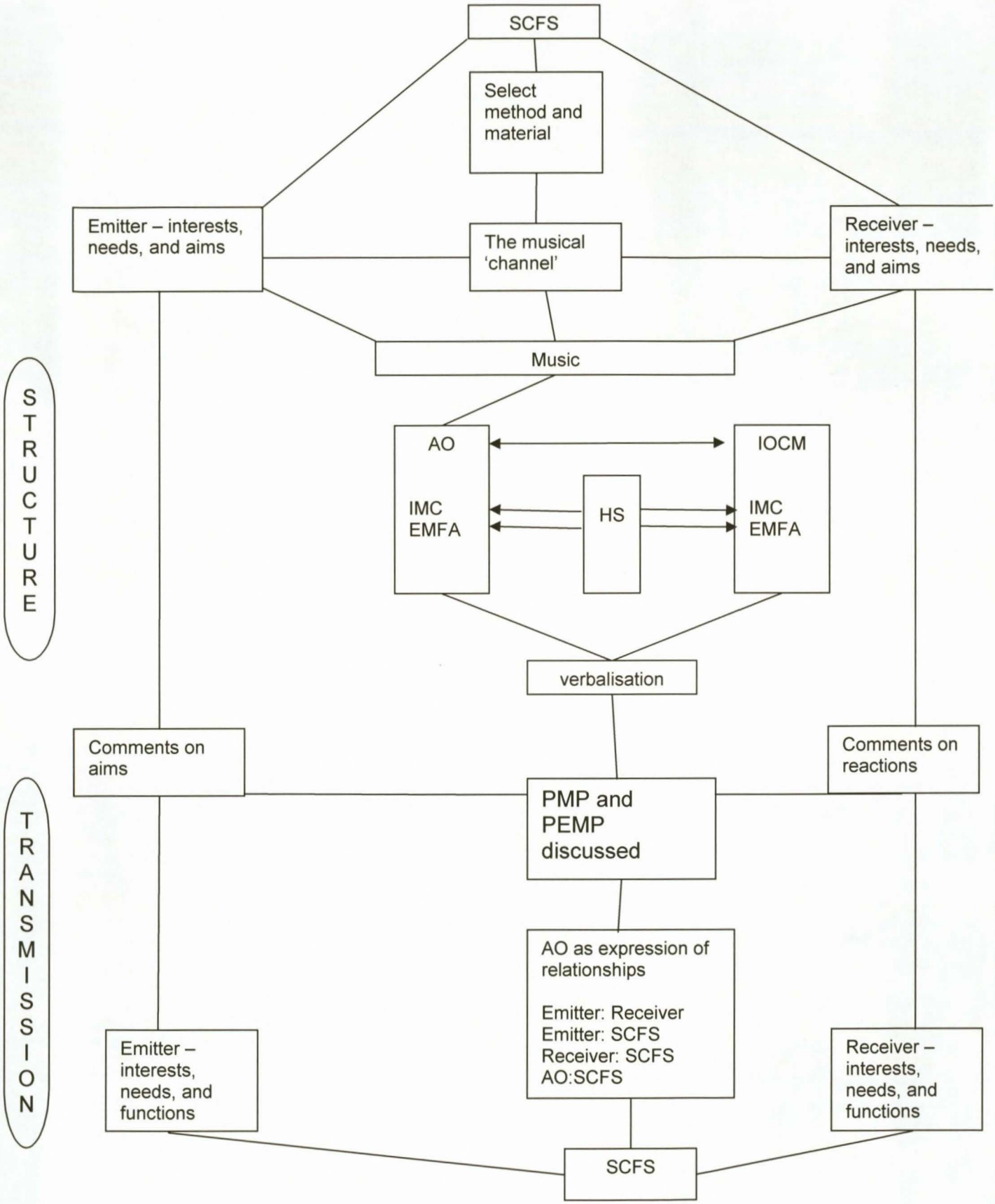


Figure 4.1 Re-worked version of Tagg's flow diagram.

Figure 4.2 Series of screen grabs from "God Save The Queen" video clip.

Figure 4.2 Continued

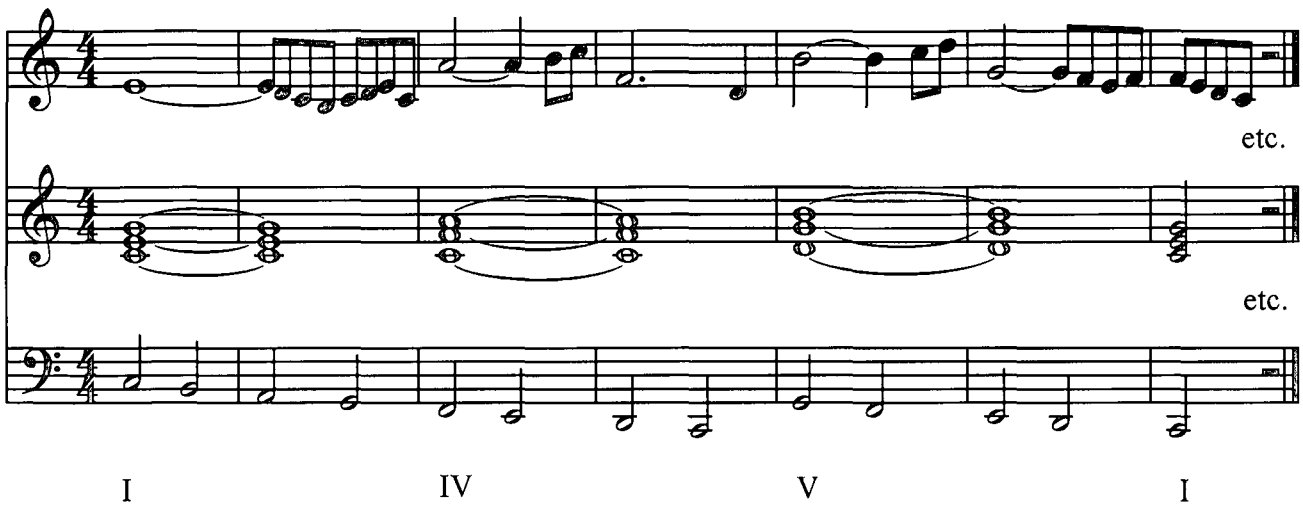
Figure 4.2 Continued

Figure 4.2 Continued

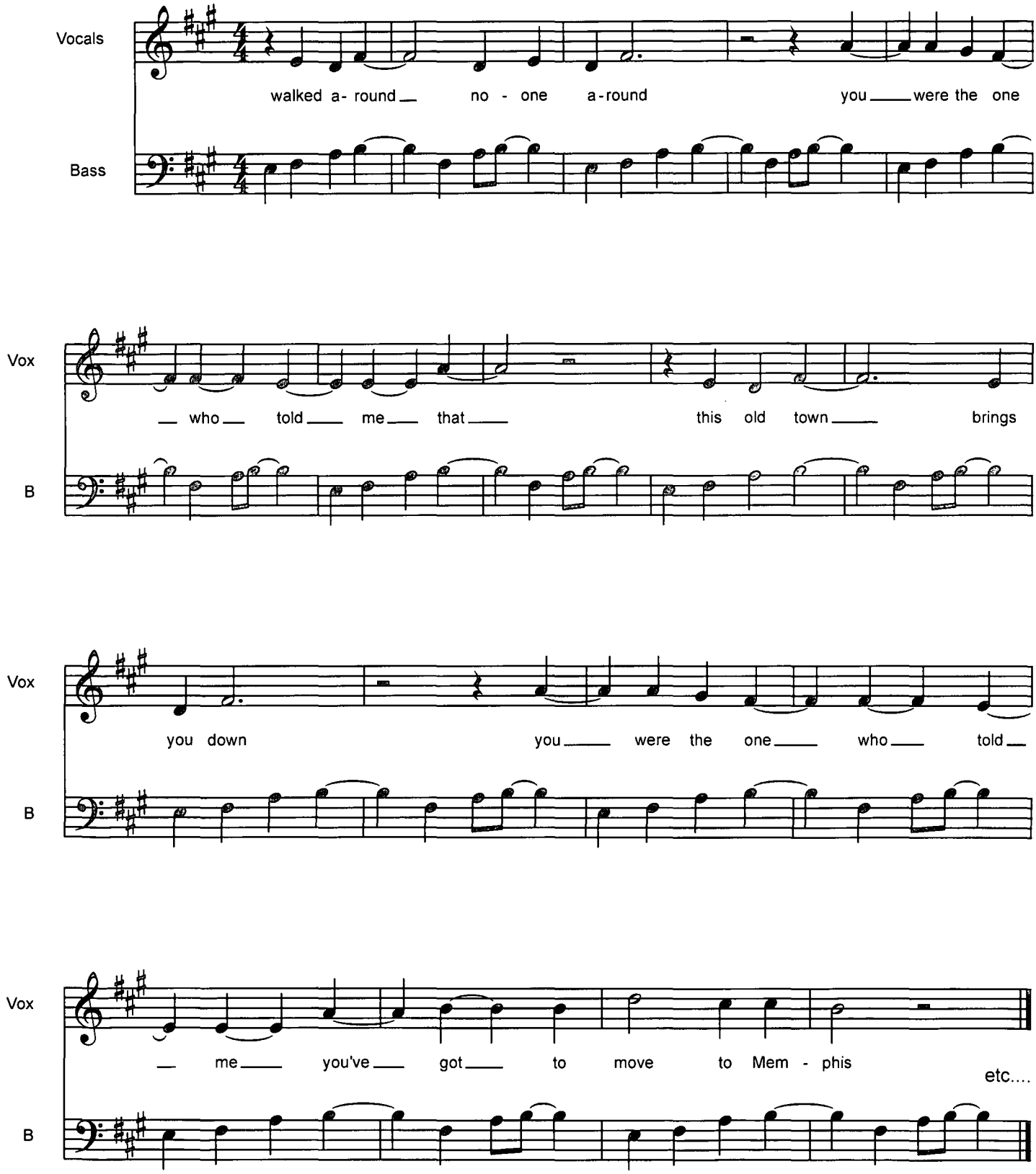
Figure 4.2 Continued

Figure 4.2 Continued

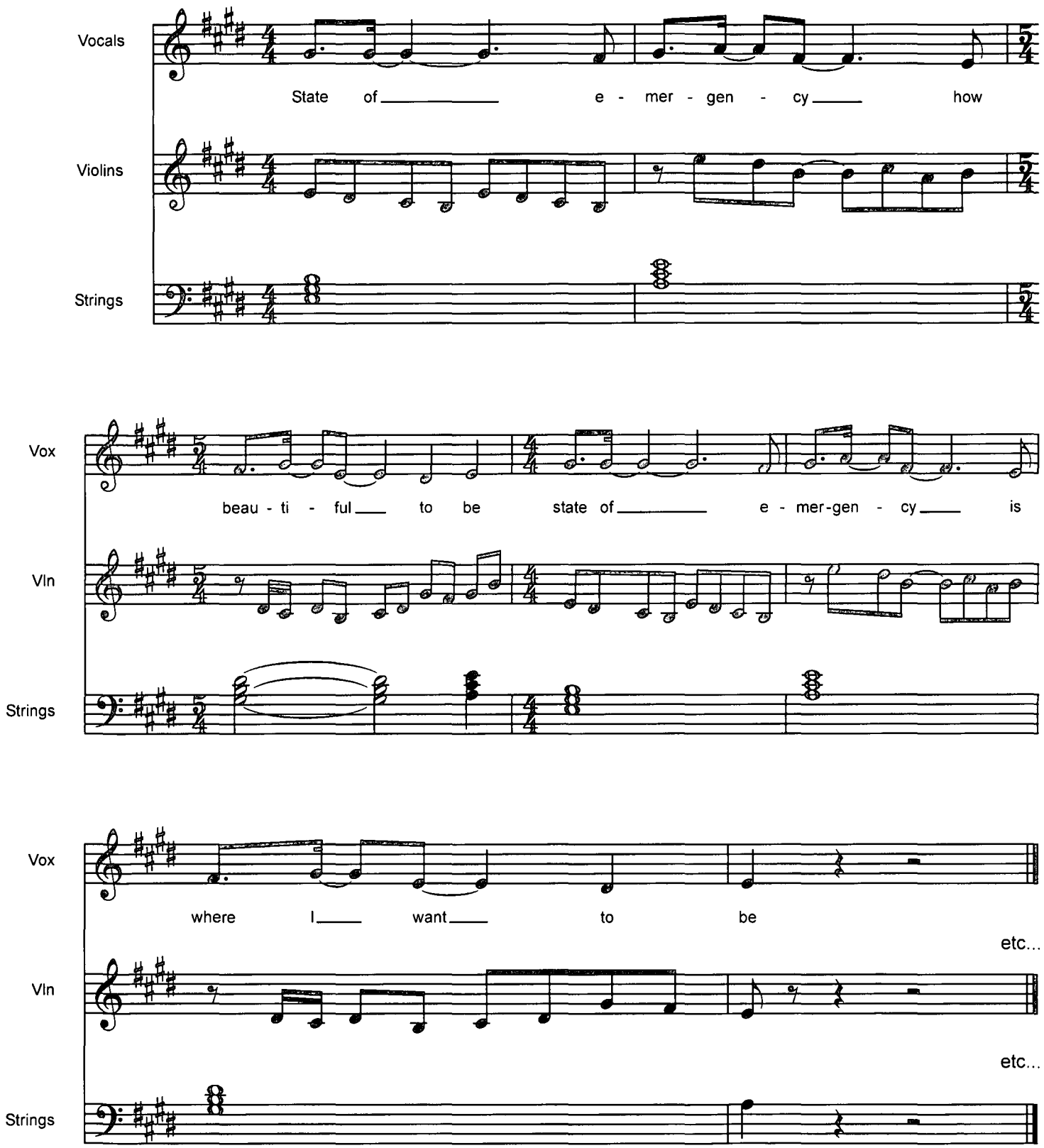
Music Examples
(pp. 192 - 210)



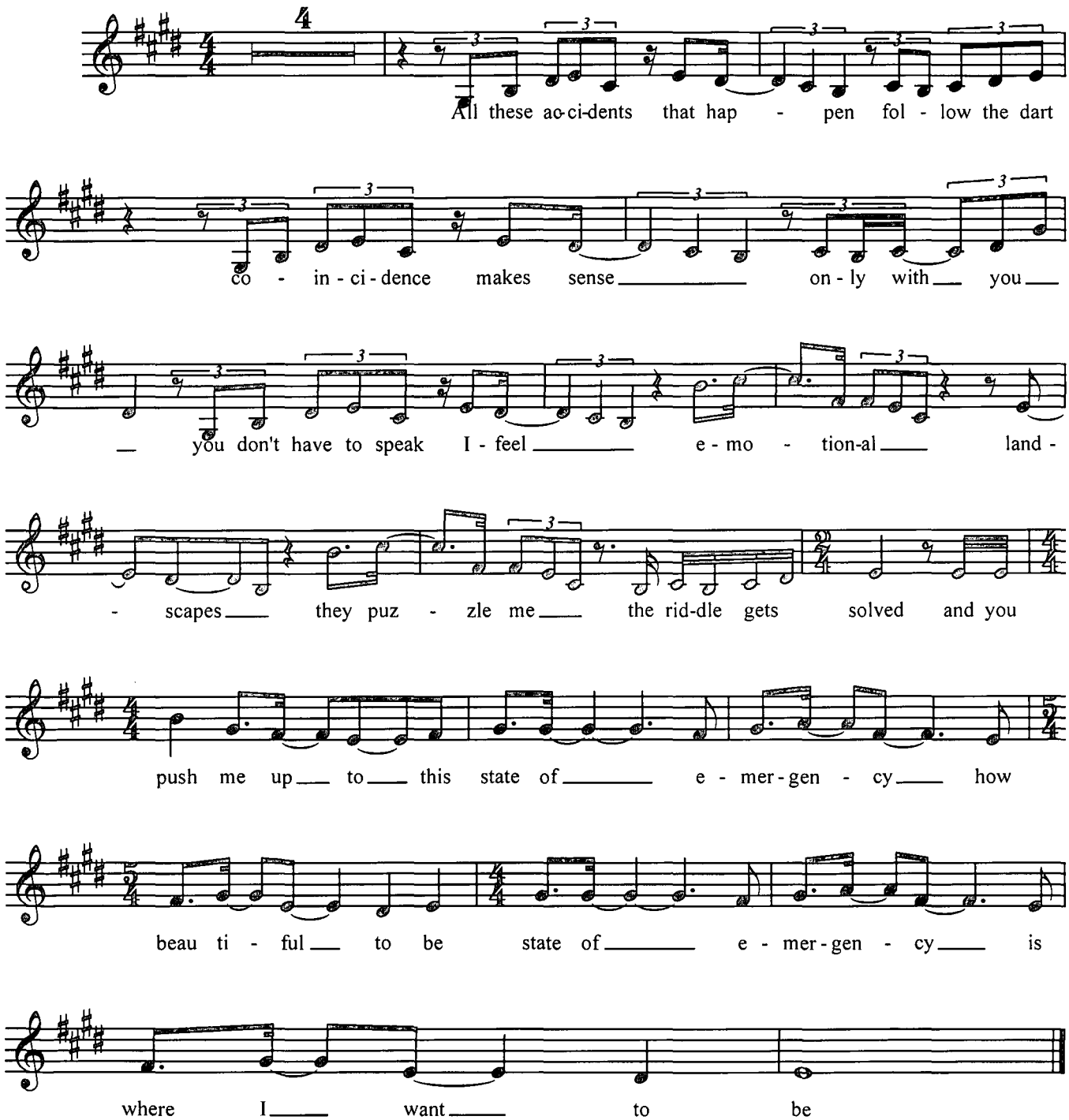
Example 3.1 Introduction to "Whiter Shade Of Pale" (reduction).



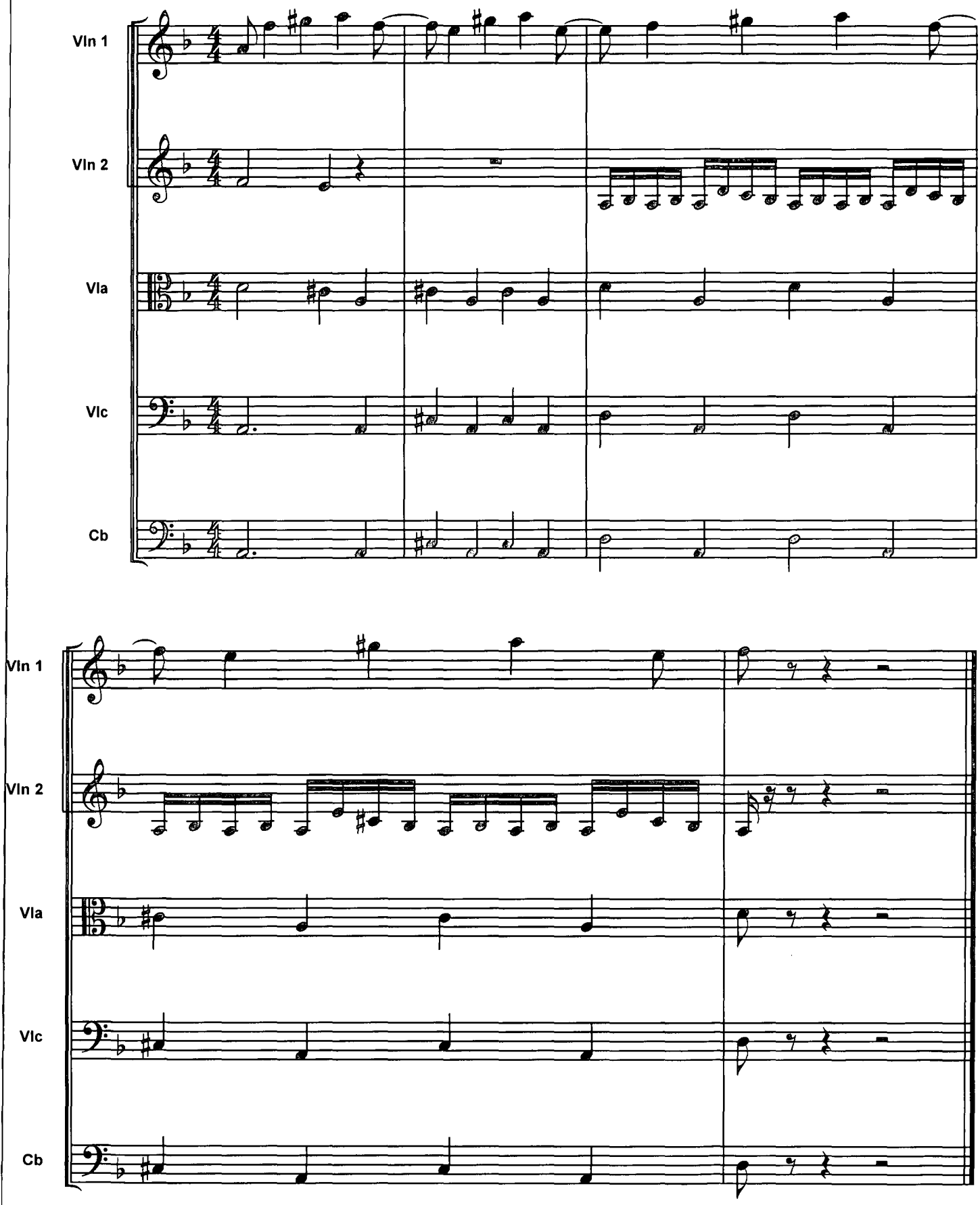
Example 3.2 First verse of "Move To Memphis", vocal melody and bass riff.



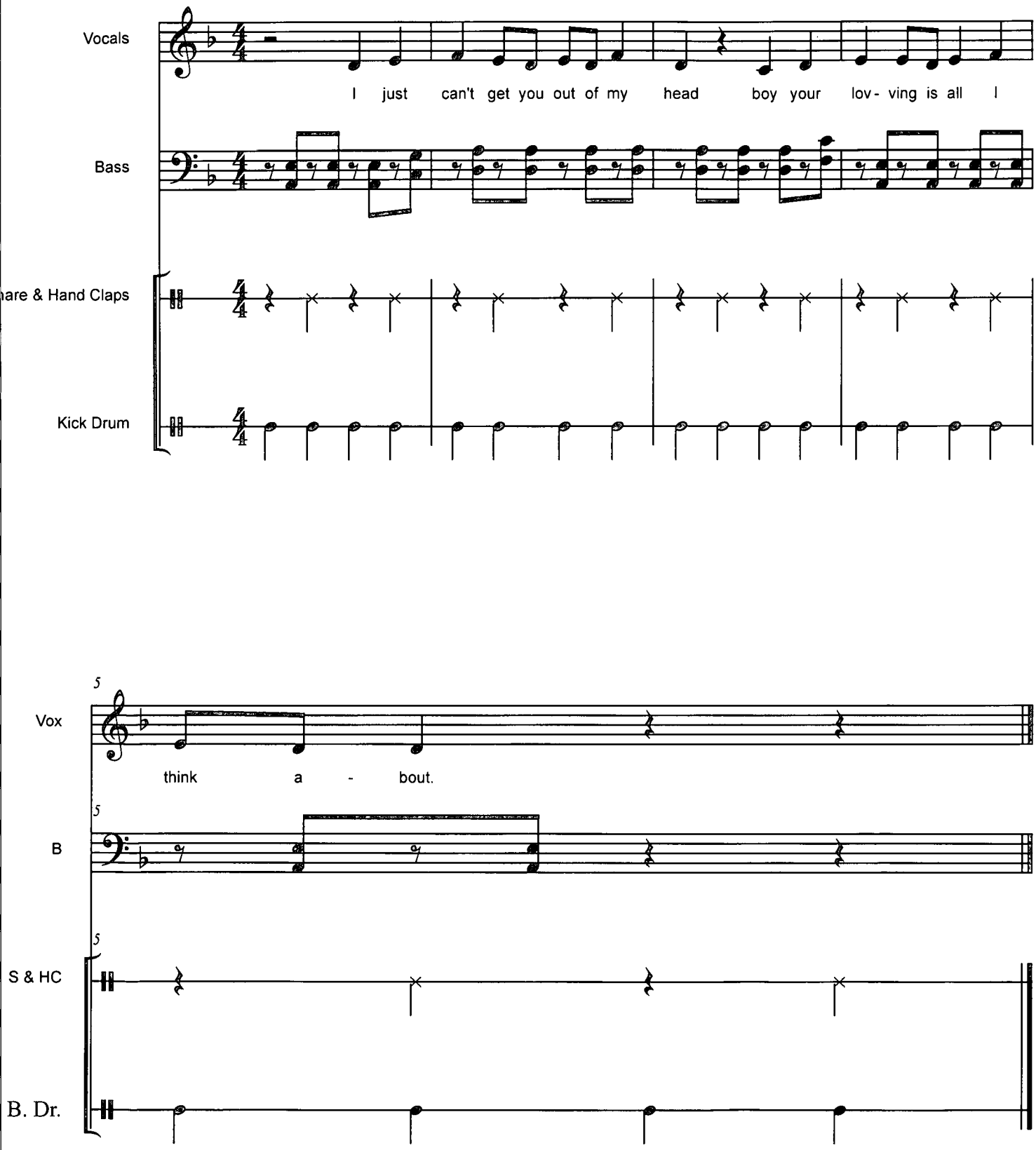
Example 3.3a Chorus of "Jóga" (reduction)



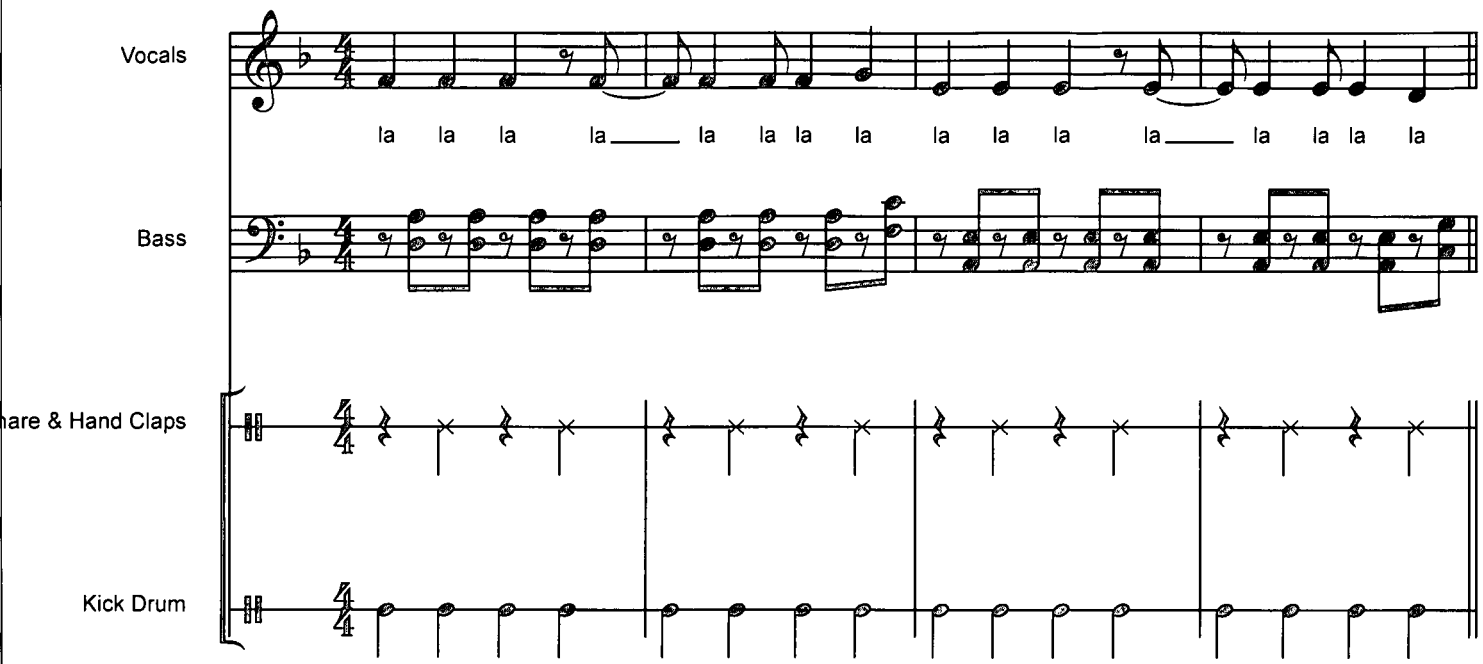
Example 3.3b Vocal line of first verse and chorus from "Jóga"



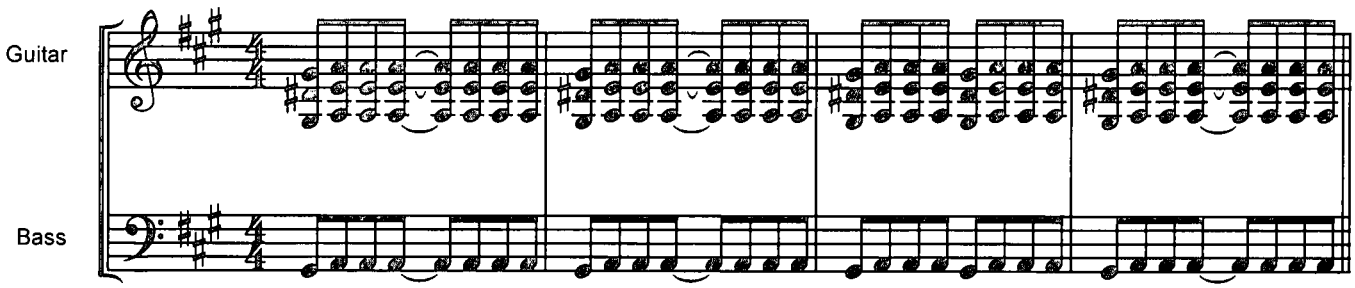
Example 3.4 Selection from Overture to *Don Giovanni*, string section.



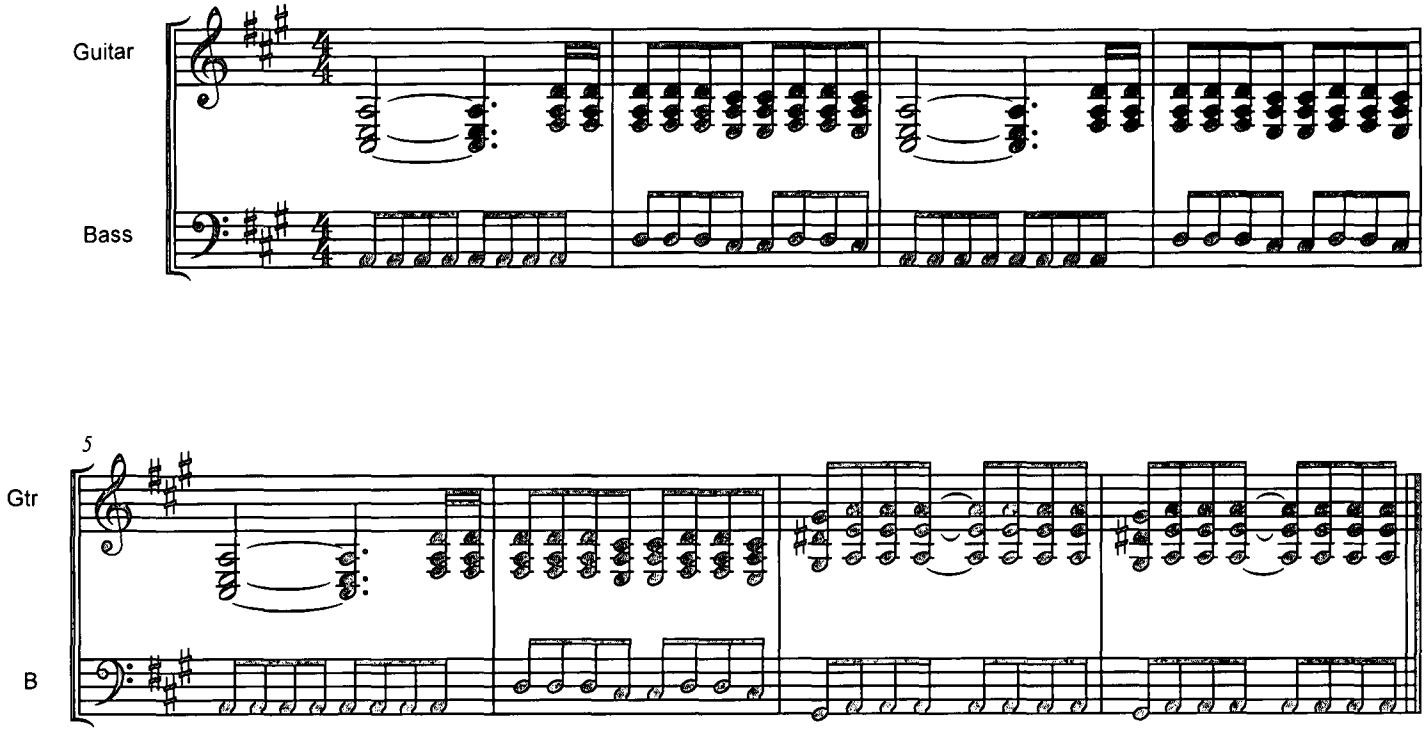
Example 3.5a Selection from "Can't Get You Out Of My Head", vocals, bass and percussion



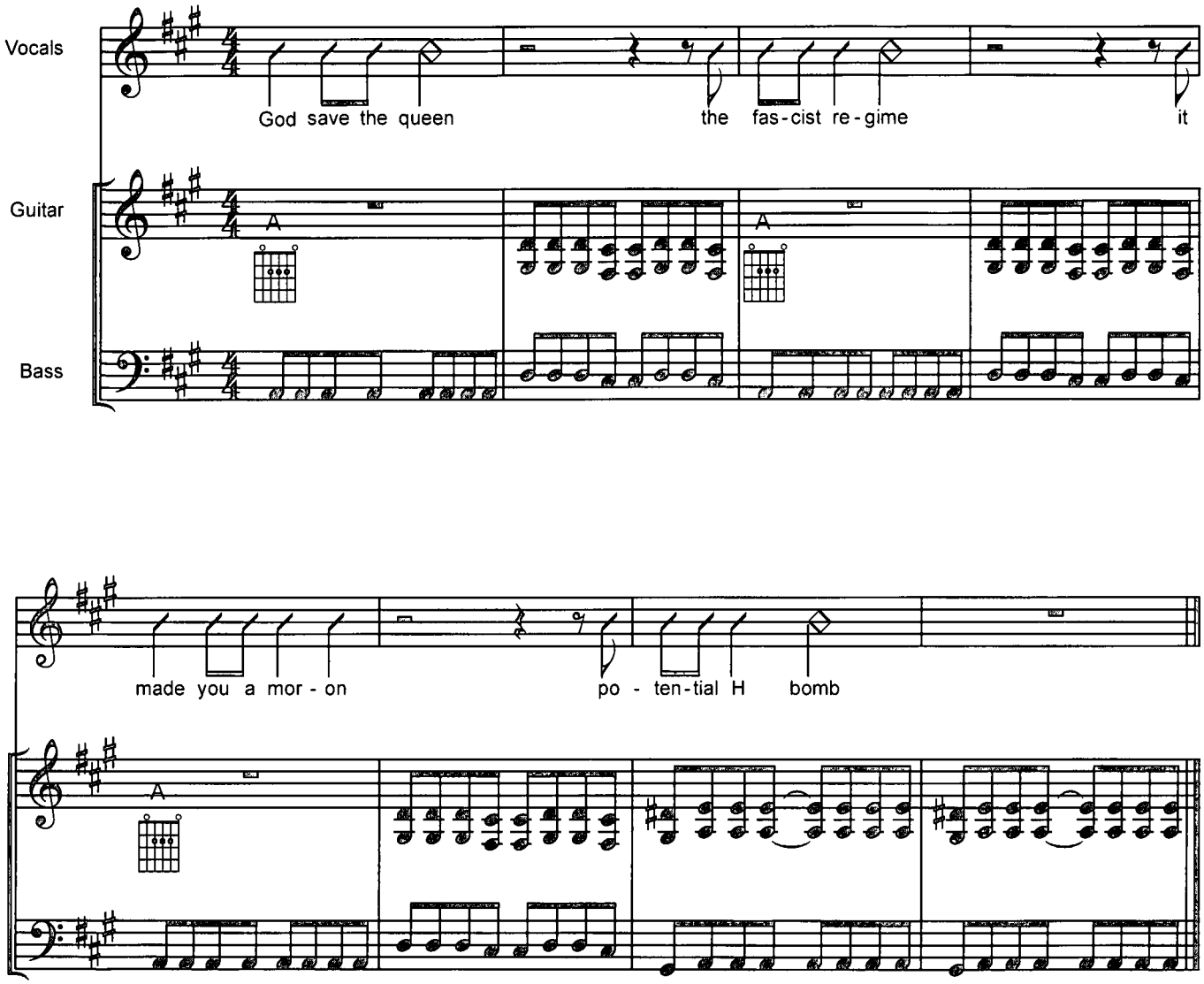
Example 3.5b Selection from "Can't Get You Out Of My Head", vocals, bass and percussion



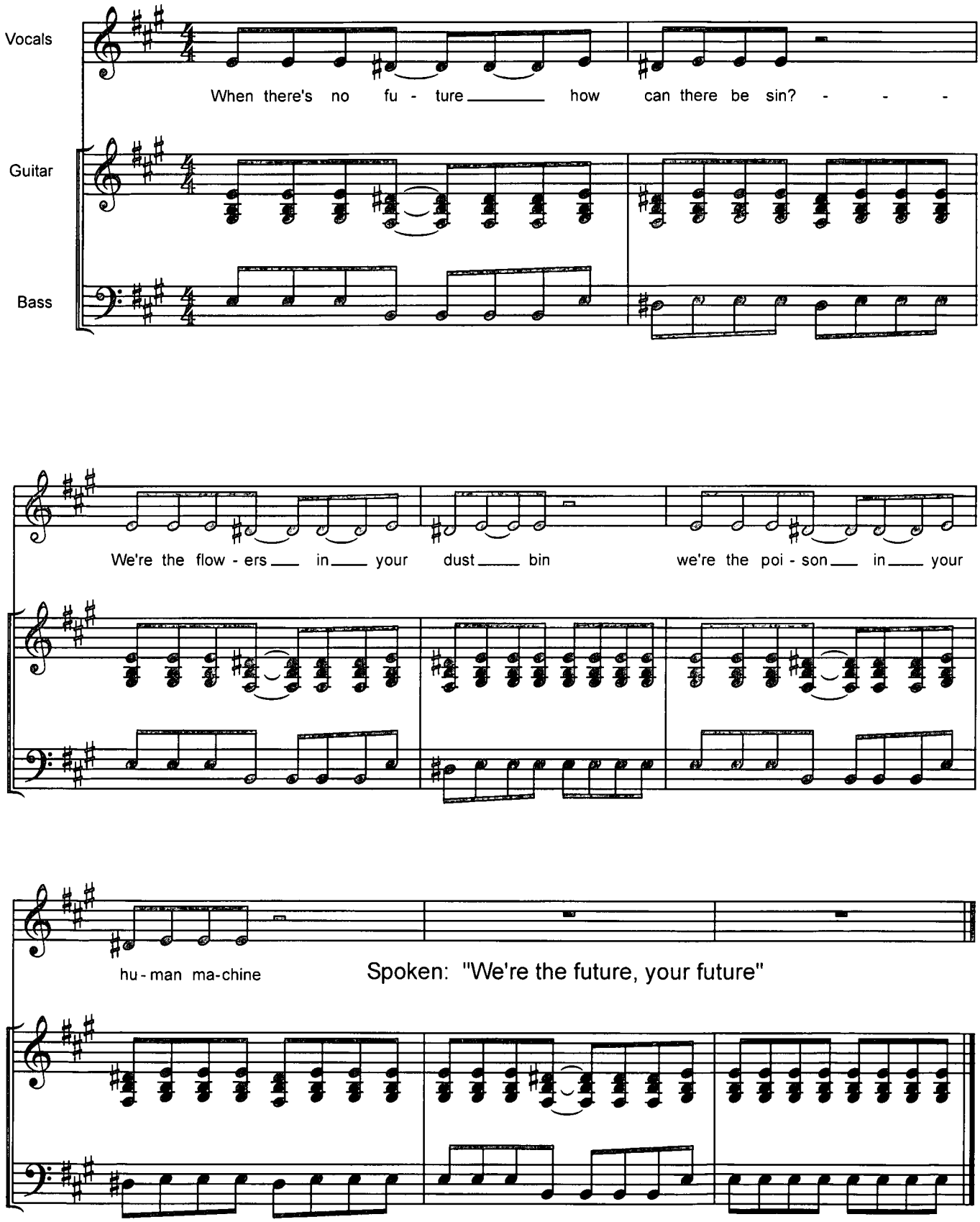
Example 4.1a Section A from "God Save The Queen", without drums.



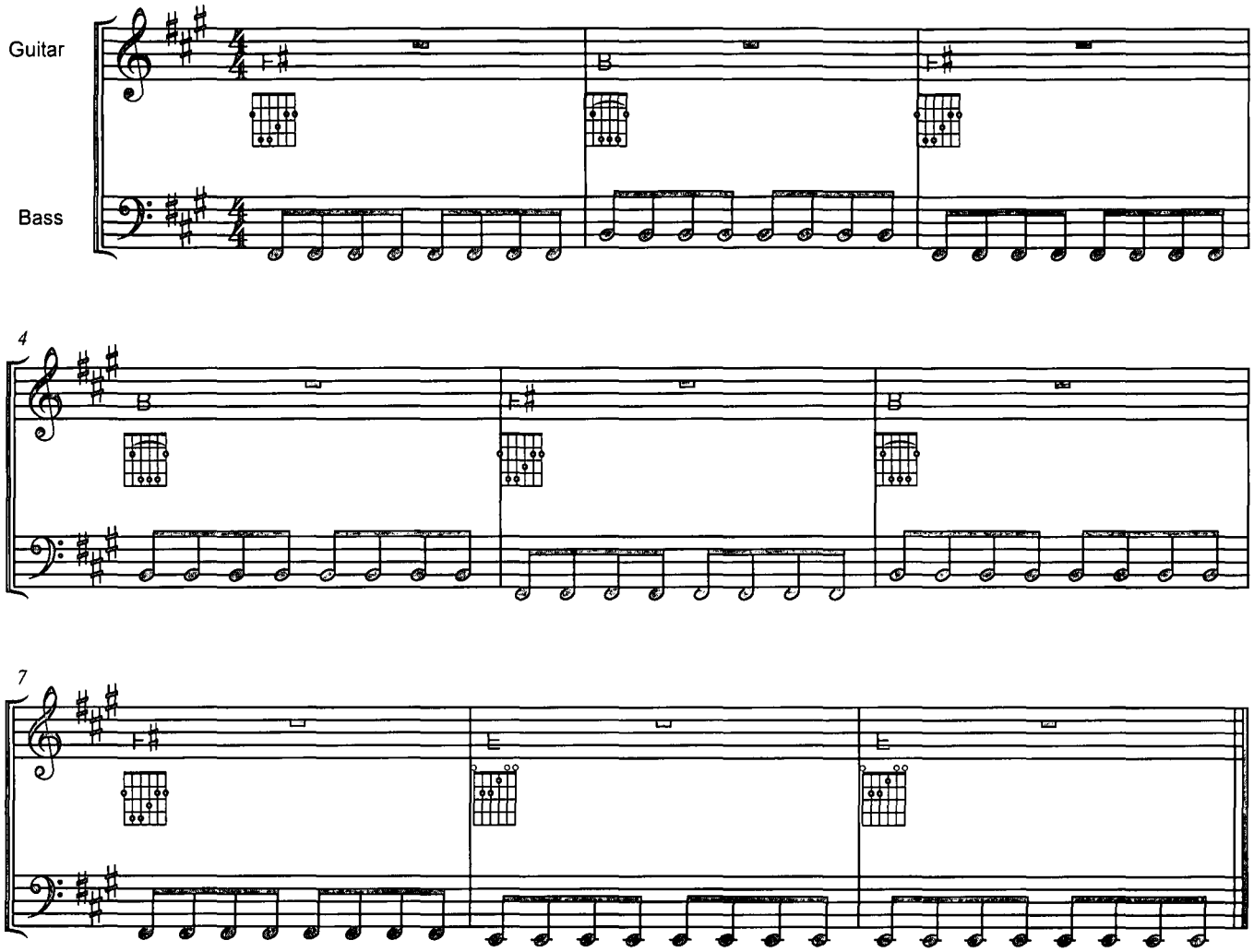
Example 4.1b Section B of "God Save The Queen", without drums.



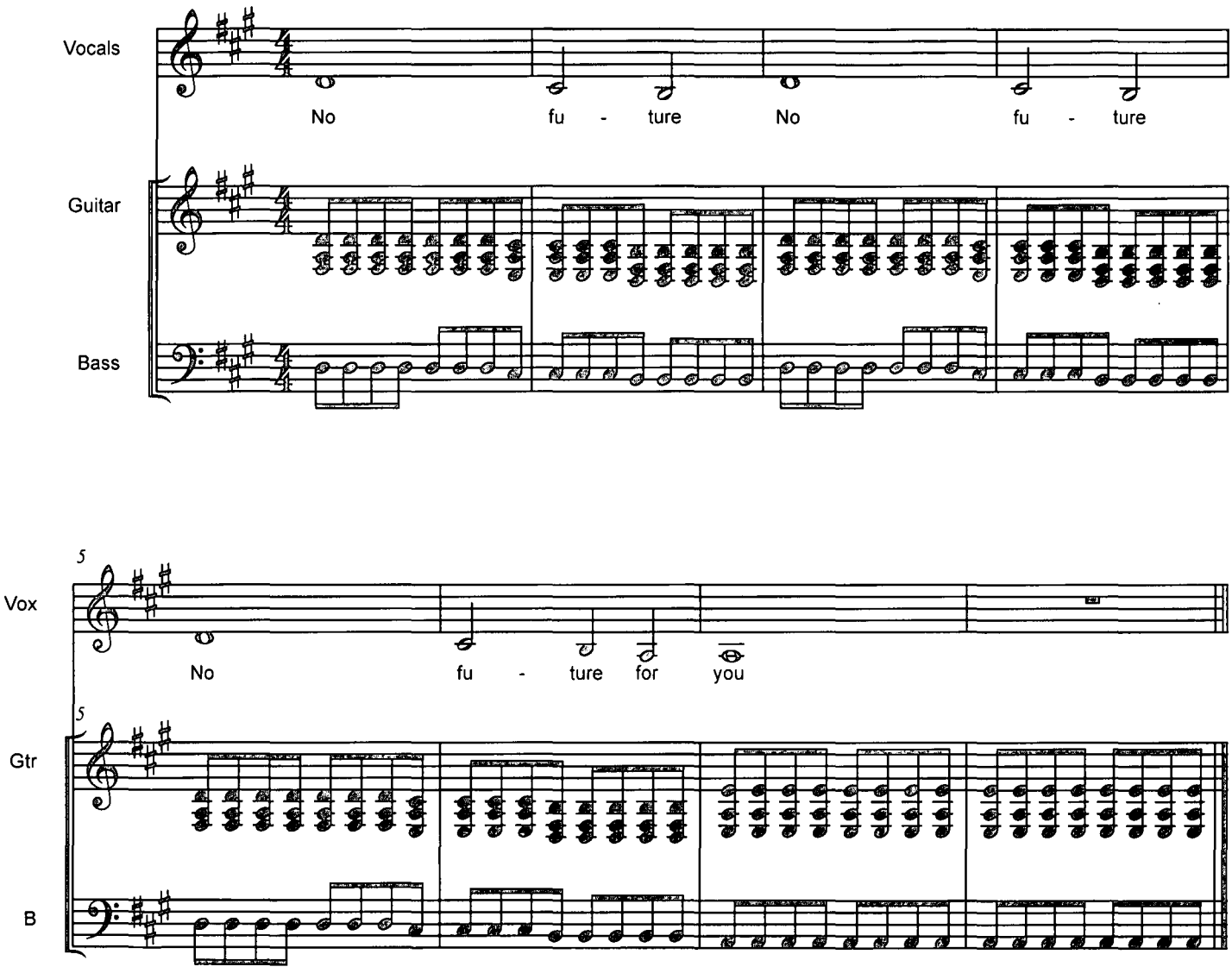
Example 4.1c Section C of "God Save The Queen", without drums. Sections where just a chord is written indicate that the guitar is just picking the chord in a choppy, "dry" way.



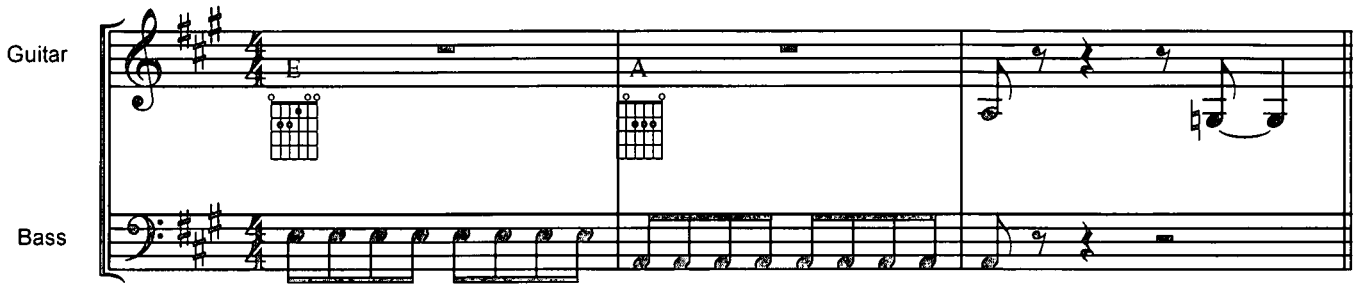
Example 4.1d Section D2 of "God Save The Queen", without drums.



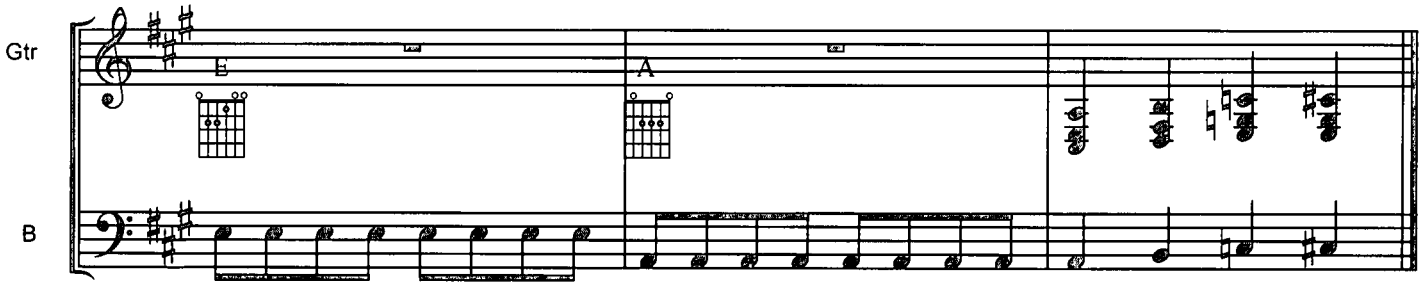
Example 4.1e Section E of "God Save The Queen", without drums.



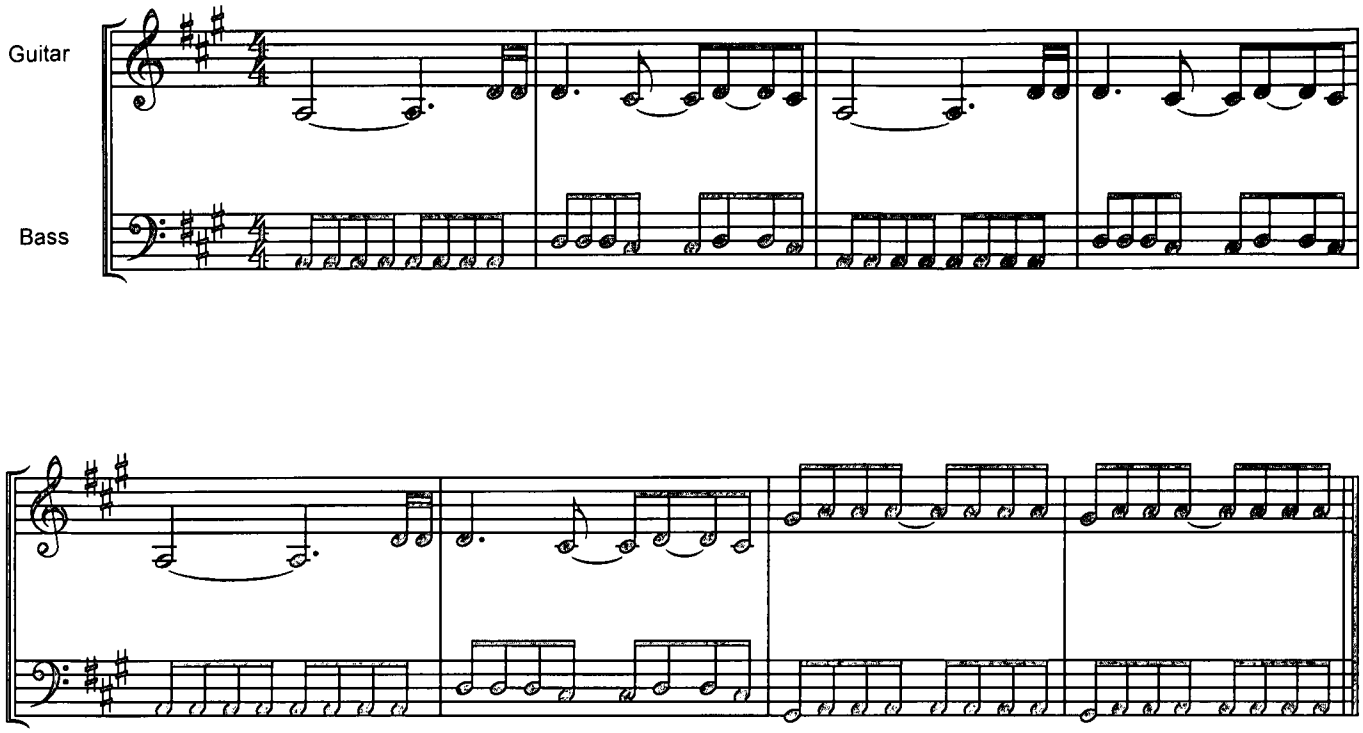
Example 4.1f Section F of "God Save The Queen", without drums.



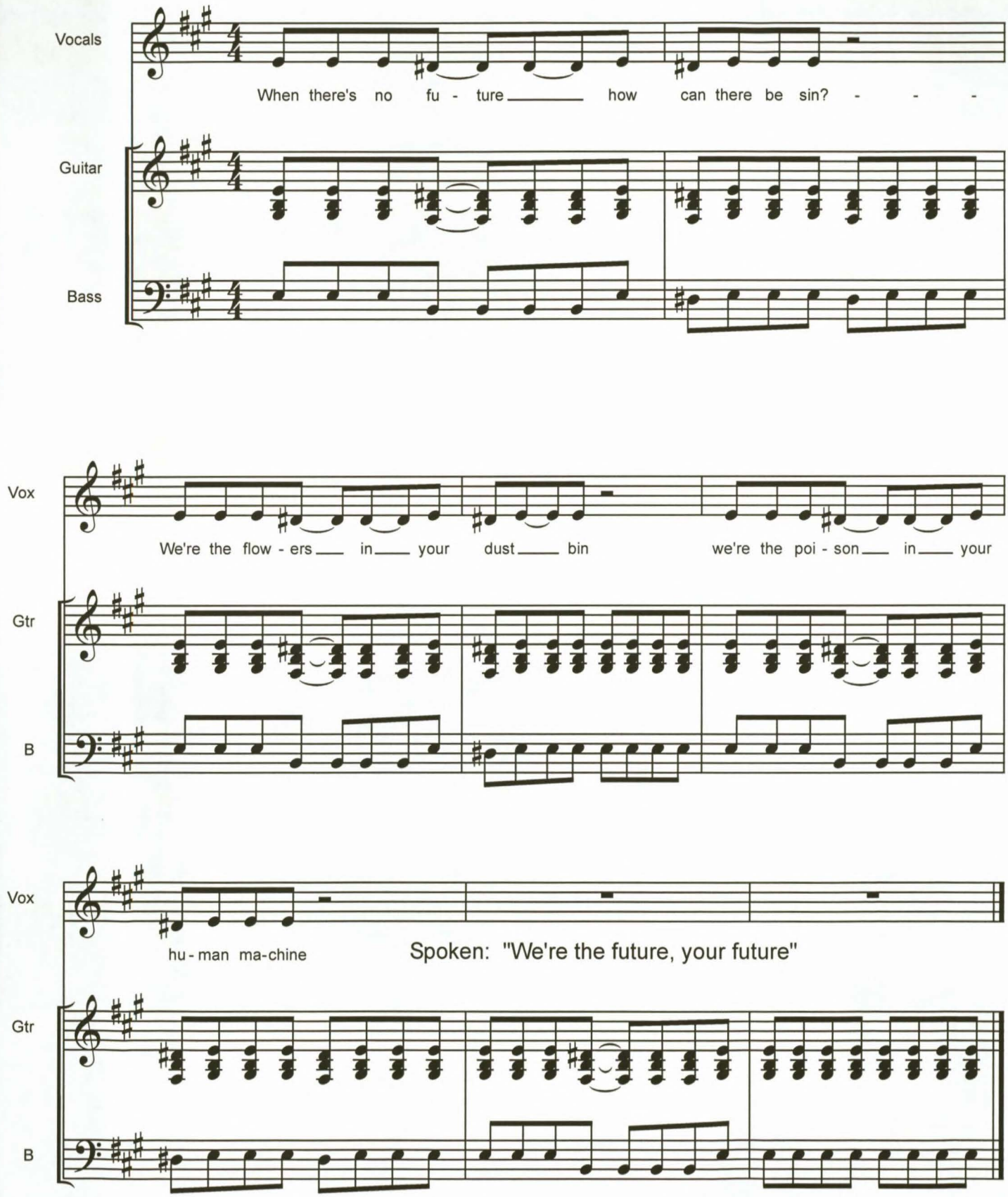
Example 4.2 Last three bars of C3, without drums.



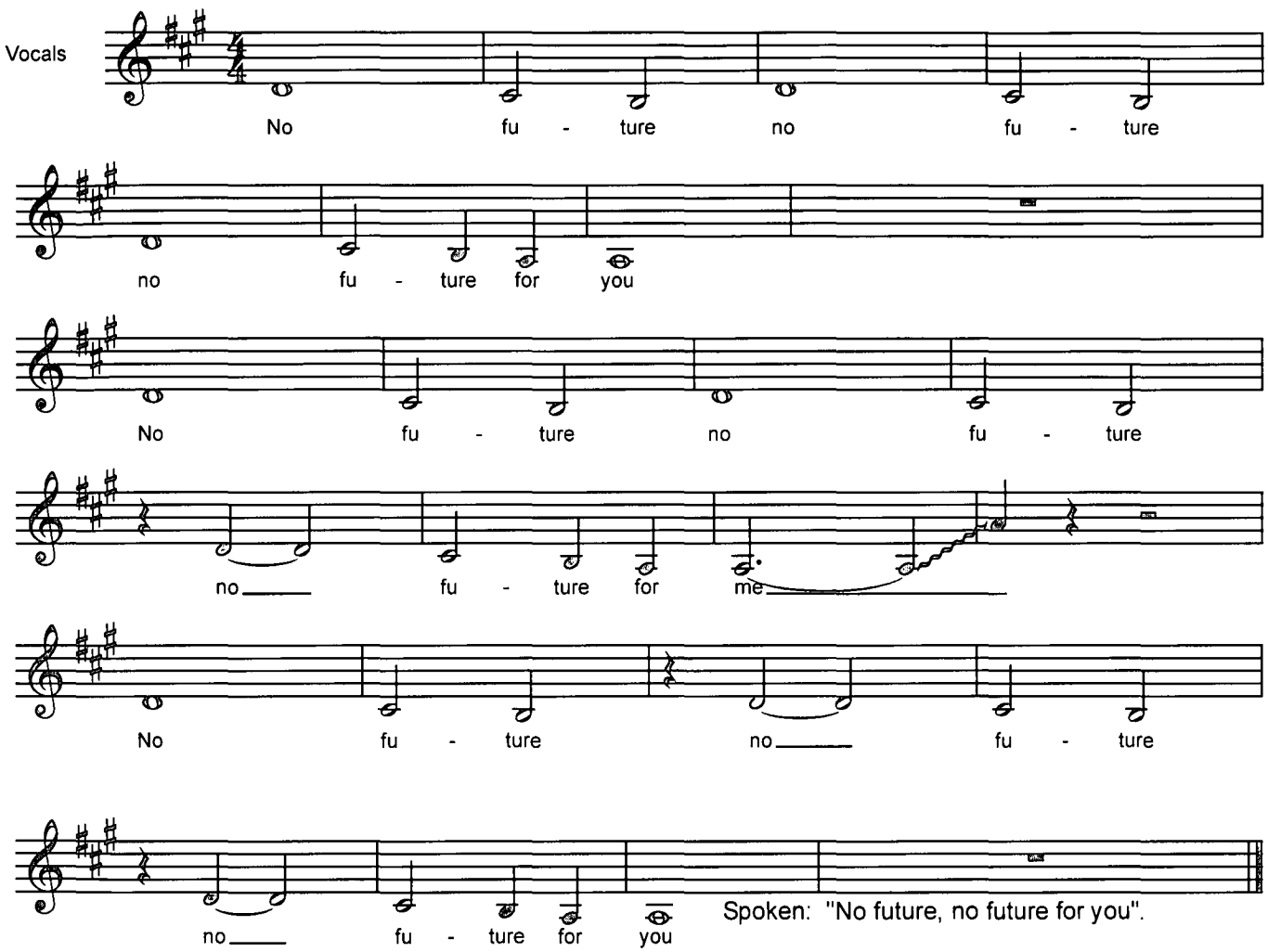
Example 4.3 Last three bars of C7, without drums.



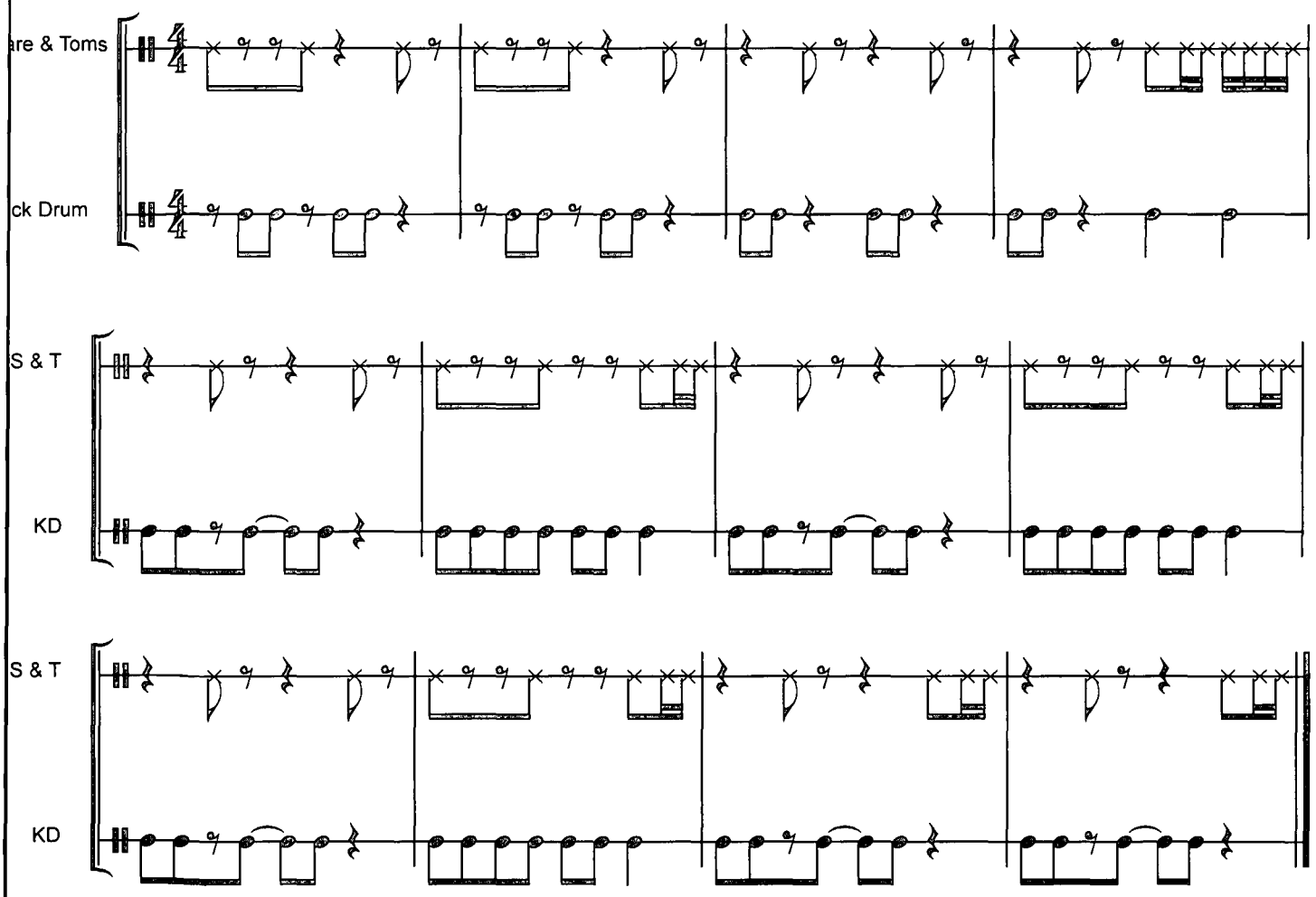
Example 4.4 Resultant melody and bass part of B and C sections.



Example 4.5 Vocal melody, lead guitar and bass of section D2.



Example 4.6 The three melodic permutations found in the three F sections.



Example 4.7 Drumming pattern of Sections A and B, with snare and toms combined on one stave. Cymbals and hi-hat are omitted.

Sources of Graphic Material

SOURCES OF GRAPHIC MATERIAL

CHAPTER 1

Figure 1.1

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Figure 1.2

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Figure 1.13

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Figures 1.11 & 1.14

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Figures 1.12 & 1.18

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OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Figure 1.15

Picture Sleeve of Digital Versatile Disc: *Sex Pistols Live at the Longhorn*
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Figure 1.16

Picture Sleeve of Compact Disc: *ABBA Oro: Grandes Exitos*
POLAR MUSIC INTERNATIONAL AB ©1992

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1

Middleton, R. 1990. *Studying Popular Music.* Milton Keynes/Philadelphia
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Figure 2.2

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Figure 2.3

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Oxford University Press

CHAPTER 4

Figure 4.2

Screen grabs from Digital Versatile Disc: *Sex Pistols Live at the Longhorn*
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Music Credits

MUSIC CREDITS

1. 2-4-6-8 Motorway (Robinson)
   ℗ 1977 Konkwest Music Ltd
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2. 5 Minutes (Black/Burnel/Greenfield/Cornwell)
   ℗ 1978 Complete Music Ltd
   © Demon Music Group Ltd
   Taken from the album *Live 'n Sleazy* by The Stranglers

3. All Around The World (The Jam)
   ℗ 1977 Polydor (UK) Ltd
   © Polydor (UK) Ltd
   Downloaded from i-Tunes at http://www.itunes.com

4. Can't Get You Out Of My Head (Dennis/Davis)
   ℗ 2002 EMI Records Ltd
   © EMI Records Ltd
   Taken from the album *Fever* by Kylie Minogue

5. Death Disco (Public Image Ltd)
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   Taken from the album *Live In Tokyo* by Public Image Ltd

6. Do Anything You Wanna Do (Douglas/Hollis)
   ℗ 1977 Rock Music Co Ltd / Island Music Ltd
   © PolyGram
   Taken from the compilation album *The Best Punk Anthems ... Ever!*

7. Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've) (Shelley)
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8. Gary Gilmore's Eyes (T.V. Smith)
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14. Hong Kong Garden (Sioux/Severin/McKay/Morris)
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Taken from the album *Once Upon A Time / The Singles* by Siouxsie And The Banshees

15. Hurry Up Harry (Pursey/Parsons)
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Taken from the album *Sham 69: The very best of the Hersham Boys* by Sham 69

16. If The Kids Are United (Pursey/Parsons)
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© Polydor Ltd
Taken from the album *Sham 69: The very best of the Hersham Boys* by Sham 69

17. Jóga (Gudmundsdottir/Sjorn)
℗ 1997 Polygram Music Publ SA
© Björk Overseas Ltd / One Little Indian Ltd
Taken from the album *Homogenic* by Björk

18. Like Clockwork (Geldof/Briquette/Crowe)
℗ 1978 Mercury Records Ltd
© Mercury Records Ltd
Taken from the album *The Best of The Boomtown Rats* by The Boomtown Rats

19. London Calling (Strummer/Jones)
℗ 1979 Dorismo
© Sony Music Entertainment, Inc
Taken from the album *London Calling* by The Clash

20. Looking After No. 1 (Geldof)
℗ 1977 Mercury Records Ltd
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Taken from the album *The Best of The Boomtown Rats* by The Boomtown Rats

21. Move To Memphis (Waaktaar/Furuholmen)
℗ 1993 Warner Brothers
© Warner Brothers
Taken from the album *Memorial Beach* by A-ha

22. No More Heroes (The Stranglers)
℗ 1977 Complete Music
© EMI Music Ltd
Taken from the album *Live 'n' Sleazy* by The Stranglers

23. Peaches (The Stranglers)
℗ 1977 Complete Music
© EMI Music Ltd
Taken from the album *Live 'n' Sleazy* by The Stranglers

24. Pretty Vacant (Cook/Jones/Rotten/Matlock)
℗ 1977 Warner Chappell Music Ltd
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Taken from the DVD *Sex Pistols Live At The Longhorn* by Sex Pistols

25. Promises (Diggle/Shelley)
℗ 1978 EMI Records Ltd
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Taken from the album *Singles Going Steady* by Buzzcocks

26. Public Image (Public Image Ltd)
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Taken from the compilation album *The Best Punk Anthems ... Ever!*

27. Rat Trap (Geldof)
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28. Tommy Gun (Strummer/Jones)
℗ 1978 Sony Music Entertainment, Inc
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Taken from the DVD *The Essential Clash* by The Clash

29. Top Of The Pops (Jon Collis)
℗ 1978 EMI Virgin Music Ltd
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Taken from the compilation album *The Best Punk Anthems ... Ever!*

30. A Whiter Shade Of Pale (Reid/Brooker)
℗ 1995 BMG Records UK
© BMG Records UK
Taken from the album *Medusa* by Annie Lennox

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